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**Remote Audiences Beyond 2000:
Radio, Everyday Life and development in South India**

By

Yesudhasan Thomas Jayaprakash

A Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of

Doctor of Philosophy

at the Faculty of Communications, Health and Science,

Edith Cowan University

2002

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ABSTRACT

The core of this thesis is that radio remains an important communication tool for tribal communities living in remote hill areas of South India. Some of the more salient findings relate to media uses and preferences of people, suggesting that sophisticated negotiations take place between audiences and media. These include suspicion of television and its impact upon work practices and education, the organization of time and space to accommodate radio and television into people's busy daily lives, and the recognition that radio may be a more innovative medium than television. These conclusions have been reached from an in – depth qualitative audience ethnographic study of three tribal communities in Southern India. The Toda, Kota and Kannikaran are tribal communities living in Tamil Nadu, South India. The Toda and Kota live in the Nilgiri Hills. The Kannikaran live in Kanyakumari district, the most Southern tip of India.

This thesis critically analyses how tribal audiences use the neighboring low power radio stations, Ooty Radio Station (ORS), and Nagercoil Radio Station (NRS) of state-funded All India Radio (AIR). It also explores how these stations ensure audience participation. Introduced in 1993, ORS is the only radio station located near the tribal communities in the Nilgiris hill area and serves distinctively like a community radio. ORS serves an empowering role to the tribal communities by encouraging innovative 'feedback' and audience participation. Its remit also includes cultural development and democratization of tribal communities living in the Nilgiris.

AIR is one of the largest radio networks in the world comprising nearly 200 radio stations located in the smaller towns and remote areas which enhances audience participation. Radio and television have been under the direct control of the Government since Independence in 1947. After a long struggle for media autonomy, India became the first country in Asia to grant autonomous status to electronic media in 1997, by the enactment and implementation of the 'Prasar Bharati Act. However, autonomous status is

still in transition and only exists as a policy but not as a practice. In other words, Prasar Bharati Corporation is dependent on the government for funding and is still controlled despite some flexibility, in the programming and presentation. In spite of the Supreme Court of India's ruling that the 'air-waves' are public property and government monopoly of broadcasting is unconstitutional, the ruling parties continue to use radio and television for government propaganda. While 140 FM radio stations located in the cities were privatized in 2000 to gain lucrative licensing fees, independent community radio, remains highly regulated.

This thesis explores how remote hill audiences use radio in their everyday lives. All communities have access to national, regional, local and international radio. The study demonstrates that tribal people are not just passive listeners but actively engage with radio for a variety of reasons, especially for agricultural information, news, entertainment and cultural activities. In a changing mediascape, where television assumes greater importance as a cultural tool, radio still remains the medium of first choice for most tribal communities. This is especially true of women who use the radio in quite different ways to men. Moreover, age is an increasing factor in media consumption in these communities. The young are more familiar with their communication options than their elders and are increasingly turning to television. Nevertheless the young still acknowledge that radio is an important medium in tribal communities.

The thesis is based on research conducted in the respective regions among the different tribal communities. It involved unstructured in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, photographs and document analysis within an overall ethnographic framework. The thesis makes a contribution to our understanding of the contemporary Indian mediascape because of its 'bottom-up' approach to ongoing issues such as access and equity in the media. It avoids the traditional 'top-down' analysis that characterizes much of the recent research into the Indian mediascape.

The thesis is one of the first to analyze remote tribal media consumption patterns and demonstrates that many of the underpinnings of media policy in India are based on false assumptions. The thesis contributes

to an ongoing re – evaluation of how tribal people use radio in the context of rapidly changing Indian mediascape.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, my sincere thanks and profound sense of gratitude to my principal supervisor Associate Professor Brian Shoesmith for his constant support, encouragement and advice. Brian, your words 'you will get there' really motivated me from day one – thanks a lot. I would also like to extend my thanks to my co-supervisor Dr. Rod Giblett for his valuable comments and proof reading.

My sincere gratitude to Edith Cowan University who gave me an opportunity to undertake Ph.D. and for the funding to do my fieldwork. I would also like to thank other staff members of the School of Communications and Multimedia, Professor. Robyn Quinn, Dr. Lella Green, Ms. Debra Mayrhofer, Professor Ron Oliver, Dr. Debbie Rodan, Dr. Dennis Wood, Mrs. Sharron Snader, Ms. Linda Jaunzems, Mr Russell Miller, Ms. Michelle de Souza, Ms. Barbara Peterson, Ms. Kolyne Tan and all others for their support and help.

My sincere thanks to Mr. Paul Halfpenny, Post Graduate Information and Resource officer, Ms. Danniel Brady, research consultant, graduate school, Ms. Julia Gross (and all other staff of ECU library) and Ms. Ann Coppleston, Student Housing Officer at Mt. Lawley campus of ECU for their help and support.

My sincere thanks to All India Radio (AIR) staff who gave their valuable time to discuss important matters relating to radio broadcasting in India. Special mention are due to Mr. Kamalakkannan, Program Executive (PEX) of AIR, Ooty, Mr. Muthusamy, Assistant Station Director, (ASD) AIR Ooty, Mr. Stalln, PEX of Drama, Coimbatore AIR, Ms. Chitraleaga, PEX of agricultural programs, AIR, Coimbatore, Mr. Ganesan, PEX, AIR Ooty, Mr. Arumugam, PEX, AIR, Tirunelveli, Mr. Savarirayan, PEX of AIR, Tuticorin, Mr. Durai Selvaraj, PEX of AIR, Tuticorin, Mr. Thangavel, PEX of AIR, Tiruchirappalli, Mr. Thamizhvanan, PEX, AIR Tiruchirappalli, Mrs. Neela

Ganga, AIR, Nagercoil, and Mr. Karuppaiah, Audience Research Officer, AIR, Chennai.

My thesis has been constantly benefited from the CR – India, Community Radio, e-mail discussion list. I would like to thank the owner and moderator of the list Mr. Frederick Noronha, and the members, particularly Ms. Bandana Mukhopadhyay, for her information on community radio movement in India.

My sincere thanks to AMIC (Asian Media Information Center, Singapore) and Radio Corporation of Singapore (RCS) who awarded the 'Radio Write Award 1999, for my research paper.

Many academics and practitioners during the international conferences offered useful insights and feedback on my research. Particularly, I would like to thank Dr. Alan McKee, University of Queensland, Australia, Professor John Hartley, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, Dr. Binod C Agrawal, Taleem Research Center, India, Professor J. Josephine, University of Madras, India, Dr. Pertti Alasuutari, University of Tampere, Dr. Thomas L. Jacobson, President, Participatory Communication Research, International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR) and Dr. Klaus Bruhn Jensen, President, Network on Qualitative Audience Research (NEQTAR) of IAMCR.

I will be failing in my duty if I do not thank my informants of Toda, Kota, Badaga and Kannikaran communities. Special mentions are due to Mr. Thillathukuttan, Mr. Jegannathan (Tiruchikadi), Mr. Singaraj Kambattan (Kollimalai) and Mr. A. P Sivakumar (Librarian, The Nilgiris), Mr. Sai Prasad (Melkouti) who guided me in the settlements. I would also like to thank Dr. Jakka Parthasarathy, (Assistant Director, Tribal Research Center, Government of Tamil Nadu, The Nilgiris), a Cultural anthropologist who provided useful guidance. My gratitude to Dr. Mohandas, Director, Tribal Research Center, The Nilgiris, who provided a suitable accommodation and access to library at the center.

My sincere thanks to my friends Mr. Victor Rajasingh, Dr. Subba Reddy, Mr. R. Chidambaranathan, Mr. Thimma Reddy, and Mr. J.S.A. Jeya Retnam.

My gratitude and thanks to my parents, Mr. S. Yesudhasan & Mrs. Amali Yesudhasan, father-in-law Mr. Jeyaseelan A.S. Thangaraj, & mother-in-law Mrs. Cecily Jeyaseelan.

Last but not least, I would not have completed my thesis without the constant encouragement of my wife Jeya Chandra Malar. I am also very happy and proud to dedicate this thesis to our daughters Rebecca & Belinda who were born when this thesis was in progress.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sound unaccompanied by vision is a potent medium, making the listener compose a private image of sound source.

(Potts, 1989, p. 7).

Hugh Leonard (1999, p.iv) secretary-general of ABU (Asia Pacific Broadcast Union), said at the '1998 conference of Public Broadcasters International':

Radio has much strength that cannot be matched by television. It is cheap to run and cheap to receive. It is mobile, so can be listened to in deserts and jungles, in padi fields and on fishing boats. It is quick to react, so is the best medium for news and information. In times of disaster, such as hurricanes or earthquakes, radio is the lifeline of the people affected, bringing them essential information for their survival. Public radio deserves a better deal than it is getting. It has even been said that, if public broadcasting is to survive in the new communications world, it will be through radio and not television.

The main aim of this thesis is to show how access to radio has aided inclusion of tribal people living in remote regions of south India into modernity. In the past decade the media culture of India has become dominated by, and transformed into, a primarily television culture. Satellite television now delivers image to areas that were until recently seen as too remote to ever receive television images and reach remote audiences. These remote audiences never expected to enter the world transmitted by television. In the 1970s the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) (see, Agrawal, 1981) was perceived to be on the cutting-edge of experimental delivery of developmental television messages to remote

communities in rural villages. Today entertainment rules the ether and India is saturated with images. Radio apparently has been swamped by this welter of images; its significance diminished and its importance as a medium of information, instruction and entertainment opportunities lost or at least put in serious decline. However, one aim of this thesis is to challenge such views and to argue not only that does radio remain a significant medium within the contemporary Indian mediascape, but also it is of increasing importance. To justify this claim I will explore the role of radio among the tribal people of remote Southern India. This exploration will show that for remote communities like Toda, Kota and Kannikaran, radio is a vital element of their evolving culture. It is a means whereby their horizons are expanded and at the same time their cultural roots reclaimed. In short, radio is an important cultural form to tribal people in Southern India.

The Problem

My central contention is that remote rural audiences in India have largely been ignored by Indian media researchers. The formation, composition and behavior of these audiences have been overlooked as Indian media researchers focused on the urban media audiences. Before going into the details of my research, let me emphasize that another major problem in undertaking this kind of contemporary radio research based on qualitative audience ethnography is a lack of literature, not only in Asia but in Europe and other Western countries as well. When discussing this problem, Peter M. Lewis, (2000) Director of Radio Studies Network in UK said,

If we look at the academic situation where radio is concerned, at the level of higher education there is lack of a subject infrastructure with the result that a condition of underdevelopment, a vicious circle this time – of too little research, too few books, too little organised or sustained study of the medium-has until recently continued to marginalia radio in the growing field of media and cultural studies. (...). Contemporary radio, either in its policy or programmes, might as well have been invisible and, to round off the effects/audience story at this date (1980s), radio was absent from the whole development of ethnographic research that sprang from Stuart Hall's discussion of 'preferred meanings' and continued with Morley's and Silverstone's work into the

domestic context and meaning of cultural consumption' (Lewis, 2000, pp. 162-163).

Although contemporary radio research is limited in the context of India, there are useful studies conducted in the other parts of the world (Ahikvist, 2001; Black, 2001; Douglas, 1999; Hendy, 2000; Howley, 2000; Mitchell, 2000; Moores, 2000; O'Conner, 1990; Ross, 2001; Tacchi, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Wall, 1999). In contrast recent studies on Indian media mainly concentrate on television (see, Krishnan, 1990; Mankekar, 1999; McMillin, 2001; McMillin, 2002; Monteiro, 1998; Rajagopal, 1993; Sekhar, 1999) and have ignored radio. This thesis seeks to redress this imbalance and focus mainly on radio audiences in remote hill tribal audiences in the Nilgiris and Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu, Southern India.

Overwhelmingly, most of the recent and current research into radio audiences in India is quantitative and urban-based. The focus of much of this recent research reflects interest in audiences concentrated around the metropolitan centers. Consequently in looking at the body of research into radio audiences in India it was evident that radio audiences in remote locations have received very little attention and were essentially being ignored. This was particularly true for geographically remote indigenous hill tribes such as the Toda, Kota and Kannikaran. However, this remoteness is not solely geographic. The extent of the marginalisation of such communities and their virtual absence from current audience studies in India was accentuated through my contact with media specialists and audience research practitioners in India who expressed a surprising degree of curiosity as to whether it had been very difficult to meet and gain the cooperation of remote hill tribes for a qualitative audience research study. Radio, generally both in India and overseas is considered to be an under researched area. Ross (2001) argues that:

It is sometimes forgotten that we still have gaps in our knowledge about how 'old' media work and this is especially true of radio as a specific medium and the multiple ways in which audiences interact with media texts more generally (Ross, 2001, pp. 420-421).

This thesis is designed to help overcome the lack of research and to understand the medium in a broader perspective, not only for its developmental value but also for the untapped information on how and why this medium is used by the rural people in South India.

Research Questions: Objectives

My research aims to depict how tribal audiences use radio in their everyday lives. This entails the critical analysis of indigenous communities through an ethnographic account of how the indigenous remote audiences in South India use low power radio station and its programs in their everyday lives for information, entertainment and development.

Primarily the research answers the question:

1. How has the recent introduction of satellite/cable television altered the way remote tribal communities use the neighboring low power radio station in their everyday lives? Following from this question a number of subsidiary questions emerge, namely;
2. What are the programs tribal audiences listen to and why do they tune into radio for that particular program and radio station?
3. How can the programs enhance the lives of tribal audiences?
4. Does state sponsored community radio differ from other regional radio in terms of program production, presentation and selection of themes?
5. How Internet radio in future can serve as a community radio for the remote tribal communities in South India?

These are important issues, which have never been dealt with by quantitative studies. McQuail (1997, p.54) argues that '...media with the highest "ratings" (in the sense of proportion reached) are not necessarily the most effective for every purpose. The relative intensity of attraction has also to be taken in to account'. The research also explores the manner in which radio has been used among tribal communities in Southern India to promote development and create an indigenous public sphere based on tribal culture.

In order to explore this aspect of the largely ignored indigenous mediascape of India, and a broader overall picture of radio use, this thesis examines how tribal audiences use different major regional radio stations of All India Radio (hereafter AIR). I have also studied listeners' dislikes and appreciation of radio programming. Generally the discussions with Informants leads to a broader classification of program such as news or current affairs, spoken word or speech, and music programs. Discussing different types of programs raised other major questions about radio in the age of globalization. Indigenous audiences are beginning to get wider exposure to the world through radio and satellite television and are aware of issues beyond their immediate community. At this juncture, how the 'public service' broadcasting 'radio' in India serves its indigenous audiences is an important question that permeates the focus and analysis of the research.

Barnett & Morrison (1989) studied the role of radio in people's lives in Britain with the aim of exploring radio audiences' views on listening. Whilst my research explores audiences in different settings and different ways to the Barnett and Morrison study, there are some similarities in relation to the nature of the audiences. My research aim is to uncover, identify and describe how tribal audiences use radio in their everyday lives and to explore a largely ignored aspect of the indigenous mediascape in India by focussing on the low power radio stations. This research also examines how tribal audiences use the different major regional radio stations of AIR to provide useful services in low power radio stations. In order to gain a broader understanding I have also studied listeners' dislikes and appreciation of radio programming. While discussing different types of programs, I also examine whether the low power radio stations serve their local audiences as public service broadcaster because the main objective of AIR stations is to serve its audiences through 'service' programs.

One of the main difference between my study and the study of Barnett and Morrison in Britain is that they argue that radio becomes a 'solo' and an "asocial" medium when listeners listen to this medium on their own. In my research among tribal communities of South India, I found that radio is largely considered a community or family-oriented medium. However, when

it comes to similarities, the tribal audiences of my research also feel like listeners in Britain, radio is perceived as a medium that provides 'background music,' 'accompaniment,' 'sense of intimacy' and so on.

By reaching remote communities in the hill areas of Nilgiris and Kanyakumari district my empirical investigation, following unstructured interviews and participant observation (see, chapter 4), discusses the audiences have to say about the domestic cultures of radio consumption in their everyday lives. I have also used my ethnographic reflections and transcribed extracts from interviews to lead my discussion and analysis of radio-listening. Hence, my research is concerned more with the qualitative than the quantitative. It analyses meanings attributed by people rather than mere head – counting measurement. Moores (1996) discusses the limitations of quantitative methods like 'diary entries' and 'traditional ratings'. He argues that researchers using these are 'producing a plausible 'fiction' for sale to advertisers' (p. 5). On the other hand, Moores argues that the ambition of qualitative research on media reception is therefore to produce a rich, interpretative account of consumption in specific social contexts' (p. 6). In India, the Audience Research Unit (ARU) largely includes a questionnaire survey method, which is often unsuitable for collecting data from illiterate audiences (Agrawal, 1981).

Background

Radio was introduced in India before Independence, and from the beginning of broadcasts in India, followed a top-down strategy in programming. That was not very effective in involving people in the decision- making process. The Verghese Committee Report (MIB, 1978) argued that:

one of the most powerful uses of broadcasting is as an educational and extension medium and an aid to development. All development effort involves an awareness of the possibility of change and motivating people to adopt new methods and improved technologies (p.125).

Motivating people in developmental activities is a daunting task because of the diverse culture, customs, traditions, beliefs, attitudes, needs

and aspirations among the population covered by a radio station in any region of India. These issues led the AIR media planners to realise that radio can be effective, provided it has to cover a more or less homogenous group with similar customs, beliefs, needs and so on. Hence, local radio stations with limited geographical reach were planned to enhance development in the rural areas. Also, the centralized program production, central government control over broadcasting, and rigid programming that has characterized the Indian mediascape since 1947 did not make radio an entirely effective medium of communication. Although television was considered to have potential as a medium for education and development in the 1970s, the television was largely used for political propaganda purposes by the ruling party. Also television production centers were largely located in the urban centers, and programs were produced for the urban middle class and upper class. Joseph (1996) argues that:

The fact that there has been no attempt to promote local or community use of television, through the provision of simple programme generating and playback facilities at the local transmitter- which could be done at a reasonable cost – suggests that there was little remaining interest in using television as a catalyst for education, social progress, or participatory democracy. Nor was it used to increase access to it among the poor, especially in rural areas' (p. 65).

Instead of producing programs for the public to see and believe, the government-controlled media in India have been broadcasting programs that reflect the government in a good light (Joglekar, 1996).

Rural broadcasting in India was launched in 1935. The programs were specifically designed for, and directed at, rural audiences. To enhance listening and to gain larger audiences, community radio sets were distributed free to rural areas by the government. Through this system the rural folks were able to listen to various subjects relating to development of agriculture, animal husbandry, rural-based industry, health, hygiene, nutrition, marketing, social education and lots more. Nowadays, the programs are more specific in the area of forestry, environmental protection, family welfare and health and social advancement. In 1965, the special farm and home units were commissioned to provide timely, relevant and technical information to farmers

in a small homogenous area with similar agro-climatic conditions (MIB, 1966). Moreover, in the rural programs agricultural education, information on cooperation, animal husbandry, poultry, fisheries, cottage industries, banking facilities, nutrition, health and other important issues were also appropriately included in the broadcasts, keeping in view the pattern of development.

India followed the lead of other countries such as Canada in introducing Radio Rural Forum (RRF). RRF was started in Canada in 1941. The main objective of rural forums was to organize small groups of individuals in rural areas to meet regularly to receive and discuss the programs. These forums were well established in Canada and were later adopted by the less developed countries like India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Costa Rica and Brazil. They proved to be very useful because poor village people could not afford to buy radio sets were then able to listen and discuss rural development programs. When the cheap portable transistor radio sets were made available to the people, the concept lost favor because people wanted to listen to radio programs at home. Thus a group-listening pattern had changed to individual listening (MIB, 1978). The radio forum programs were very useful to those farmers who were affluent and well-educated. The illiterate farmers were unable to understand the program content. Illiteracy and lack of educational background are still a barrier to this medium. Poor farmers need information cheaply and frequently, which radio can provide. Since Independence, radio and television have been a monopoly of the Indian Government.

This monopoly has been challenged legally. Following a dispute between CAB (Cricket Association of Bengal) and Doordarshan (The National Television Broadcasting in India), the Supreme Court of India declared in 1995 that the monopoly of owning airwaves and much of the existing Indian Telegraph Act 1885 was unconstitutional. Moreover, the Supreme Court added that the Indian Telegraph Act was inadequate in the present situation. Hence, the Supreme Court asked the Central Government to establish an independent, autonomous, public authority to regulate the use of airwaves. Ownership of media has had a direct impact on the content and presentation of messages. Autonomy involves a highly participative and

decentralized style of management and the fostering of a culture of independence among individuals as well as units. The Verghese Committee Report (MIB, 1978) recommended setting up an autonomous body, Akash Bharati, that was not accepted by the Government. The Government said it was more concerned about the 'functional autonomy' of the media, rather than the creation of an autonomous corporation. Later, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on several occasions said AIR and TV already enjoyed functional autonomy, and the government had no intention of interfering in its day to day activities. In 1979, a considerably modified Prasar Bharati Bill^{*} providing autonomy to the electronic media was presented to the 'Lok Sabha' (Lower House of the parliament). However, the new Congress Government, which came to power in 1980, did not regard autonomy for the media as an important issue. The new Congress government continued its traditional policy towards the broadcast media. Ruling parties used radio for their propaganda and controlled the medium.

Rajiv Ghandhi, son of Indira Ghandhi, declared while on a trip to the USA, soon after he was elected in 1985 that India was not yet 'ready' for an independent radio and TV. On the 14th of September 1997, the historical

* During the 1975 Emergency, (Allahabad High Court disposing an election petition, debarred Mrs. Indira Gandhi for six years from the membership of Lok Sabha, so the government decided to impose an Emergency in India) censorship was imposed on all media. After these events all the opposition parties (non-Congress parties) without exception included "genuine autonomy" for electronic media in their election manifesto. In 1977, the then Information and Broadcasting Minister of Janata regime, L.K. Advani, set up a committee headed by senior journalist B.G. Verghese to free DD and AIR from government control. The committee, which was later popularly known as the Verghese Committee, recommended an autonomous National Trust under which radio (AIR) and television (DD) would function. Later the Janata government collapsed and the recommendations were not implemented. Again in 1997, during V.P. Singh's Janata Dal government, the then Information and Broadcasting (I&B) minister P. Upendra introduced the Prasar Bharati Bill, which was initially opposed by the Congress, but later the bill was passed with various amendments. This government too collapsed. After seven years, on September 15, 1997, The Prasar Bharati Act of 1990, which seeks to free AIR and DD from direct political control was revived by the I & B Minister Jaipal Reddy and was implemented. The Prasar Bharati Corporation is run by a fourteen member board headed by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), all elected by a committee comprising of the Vice President of India, the Indian Press Council Chairman and an eminent person nominated by the President.

Prasar Bharati Bill was implemented. Declaring this to the media, the Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Mr. Jaipal Reddy, said

After September 14, there would be no Big Brother breathing down their neck, no telephone calls from private secretaries of the ministry telling them what to do or not to do. It would be their show and they would be free to run it the way they like

The Minister added in an interview given to *The Hindu*, (1997), a national daily in India, that he wanted 1997 to be remembered as an historic year for the electronic media. By freeing the electronic media from Government control and regulating the presence of foreign satellite channels through the proposed Broadcasting Bill, India would become the only country in the third world to have a truly liberal broadcast regime with a state-funded, but autonomous 'Prasar Bharathi' on the one hand and a competing network of private channels, domestic as well as foreign on the other. Due to this implementation of the Prasar Bharati Bill, AIR and Doordarshan would be completely independent of the Government. Emphasizing this, the Minister reiterated that Doordarshan and AIR would cease to be tools of propaganda for the Government, the ruling party or cliques in the ruling party. When replying to questions related to funding the Minister said that Prasar Bharati would be accountable only to parliament and not to the government, which was going to be the significant difference.

The autonomous status of the electronic media would help its personnel to work independently and with greater freedom. A retired station director told the working group that he joined Akashvani (Radio) a 'fearless' man, but retired a 'timid person' (MIB, 1978, p.146). Since the implementation of Prasar Bharati, the electronic media staff can work independently without interference from the Ministry. Although private operators were allowed to broadcast over FM channels in 2000, the government had made it clear that broadcasters would not be allowed to broadcast news and current affairs programs (Mehta, 1999b). The government also clarified that it did not intend to privatize AIR. Local radio stations were introduced in the 1980s and there were few success stories in the initial stages, but now the concept of localization has been defeated in

India due to the commercialization of FM radio studios within the country. Also the programs are largely related to the regional and national radio stations. Failure of local radio stations also limited the diversity of programming and inhibited audience participation. Although local radio is a new concept in India, local radio stations in recent times have largely relayed programs from regional and national radio stations, thus paving the way for the defeat of local radio policy. If action is not taken to bring true autonomy to the 'Prasar Bharati' controlled electronic media, allowing community radio stations in India, there is a danger of losing audiences for public service broadcasters. In other words, commercial channels are going to capture audiences through their attractive entertainment programs.

There were no private channels when the Prasar Bharati Act was enacted in 1990. Hence, there was a necessity to create an independent broadcasting agency, which was free from government controls. But now that there are a number of private channels providing a forum for a multiplicity of opinions, the question arises as to whether the government should use its own captive channel to present its point of view to the people. Does India need Prasar Bharati, an autonomous corporation that allows electronic media to function on its own, without any further control from the government? Ruling parties (BJP, Congress etc) have used the Prasar Bharati as a propaganda medium. Do we need an autonomous corporation when we have private channels? Why don't we have a medium for the government to express its views? Is the Prasar Bharati, another form of control over electronic media in India? Where will the money come from? Obviously the government will have to continue supporting the newly merged organization with grants. But how autonomous can an organization be if it has to depend on government funding? According to media commentator, Bhaskar Ghose, 'There can be no autonomy if it has to go to the ministry for funds' (Bhaskar Ghose in, Bhandare, 1997) Pramod Mahajan, the Minister of the then Information and Broadcasting (I&B) said, 'The Prasar Bharati corporation should be scrapped and the government needs to retain control over Doordarshan (DD) and the AIR' (Singh, 2000). MIB sold 107 FM frequencies in 2000 enabling the private business establishment to run

commercial radios in metropolitan areas and big cities. At the same time a number of applicants seeking permission to start rural based community radio stations are pending with the Ministry, and recently an application seeking a license to own and broadcast community radio by the DDS (Deccan Development Society, Bangalore) has been rejected.

Following these developments a community radio movement was initiated in September 1996 (see chapter 4) in which media experts, academics, media critics and journalists met together at the National Institute of Advanced Studies in Bangalore, India, to discuss media policy and community radio. This consultation was mainly organized on the basis that the radio has enormous potential as a medium of communication. Moreover, this medium has a combination of low cost and wide reach. AIR, the government-owned network, has been a single network and thus has monopolized the whole radio-broadcasting scenario in India. Even though AIR has an Audience Research Unit (ARU), which has been conducting mainly, pure quantitative research, the highly centralized, top-down approach and functions 'have allowed little access by people at the grassroots level to this medium' (Voices, 1996). The report arguing that the FM broadcasting in all the four metropolitan centers had been leased to private broadcasters who used their slots to gain lucrative advertising revenue. This policy does not create an environment to satisfy the developmental and communication needs of the different sections of the society.

The report strongly criticizing top-down approach, argued that 'no policy should emerge at the expense of the less privileged, marginalised rural communities, such as poor women, Dalits (untouchables or scheduled castes) and tribal peoples. Even though AIR already operates local FM radio stations in rural and urban areas, the report clearly indicated that AIR radio stations were not serving the information needs or community interests of the marginalised rural areas, and that AIR stations should not be regarded as community radio stations. The report also recommended that since radio broadcasting is likely to be privatized the agricultural universities and cooperatives could be encouraged to take a role in providing coverage to the rural and remote communities. It is possible that women's groups, NGO's

and farmer groups could also be given a role in the future of community broadcasting. The consultation revealed opportunities and uncovered issues relating to the privatization of radio broadcasting in India (Voices, 1996). There is an urgent need for a public service broadcasting system that includes both state owned media and non-commercial broadcasting. This would help foster the collaboration of universities, community organizations and NGOs in development communication. As a result the Prasar Sewa Bill was privately drafted in 1995 by a group of communication and media experts. The bill recommended three streams of broadcasting: 1. Market driven satellite broadcasting including cable, terrestrial and satellite services; 2. Community service broadcasting by the universities, trusts and; 3. NGOs to produce programs that reflect local realities and concerns (Sarma, 1998).

Audience participation is crucial for a successful community radio project. The Mahaweli Community Project in Sri Lanka is a good example of this concept. The Government of Sri Lanka launched the Mahaweli Community Radio Project in January 1991 in collaboration with UNESCO. In this project, the programs were produced in the field. The villagers were given the opportunity to write, direct and participate in programs. To achieve this, the producers who had experience in the production of radio programs, mixed freely with the villagers. The villagers discussed the problems and solutions among themselves. Moreover, the programs were produced in the village and editing was done in the presence of villagers. In order to enhance feedback, the project established listeners clubs in various places. The findings of the SLBC (Sri Lankan Broadcasting Corporation) research showed that the 'villagers had applied the knowledge gained from the programs to their day-to-day life'. The farmers especially used information about fertilizer and seeding (Karunanayake, 1986).

Context

Radio is a popular medium among the communities who are more reliant on oral tradition (Dube, 1990a) rather than the more literary based. Radio stations are increasingly being located nearer to rural audiences. Consequently it is easier for the rural audiences to approach the radio

stations to participate in their programs. Nowadays radio personnel in India encourage people to visit radio stations unlike prior to the 1980s when there were strict procedures limiting admission onto the premises of radio stations in India. Program officers are now beginning to come out of the air-conditioned studios to meet people and produce more relevant programs than before. Radio is now a relatively more accessible and useful medium for the remote and rural audiences than either print or TV because of its low cost and portability. Another major advantage for radio is that the audiences in remote and rural areas often experience power cuts, which frequently interrupt TV broadcasts. In these situations radio is far more reliable. This is particularly so during natural disasters where AIR has a policy of broadcasting programs round the clock to inform people about government action plans, which can be critically important to the local population.

A research publication by the Audience Research Unit of 'Doordarshan', the Government owned television network of India, reveals that people living in the *mofussil* (rural areas) have very limited exposure to television. The publication states that the exposure rate is 31.5 per cent in the rural population compared to 74.1 per cent in urban areas (Doordarshan, 1996). This shows that the availability of television is not widespread among some rural populations of India. Although radio has enormous potential in disseminating messages to the rural and remote audiences, we cannot deny the fact that it has some obvious limitations – it is non visual and consequently demands listening skills, and, as far as spoken word programs are concerned radio really requires the careful attention of the audience.

It is important to refer here to a recent debate (Raut, 2000) which occurred in CR (Community Radio) India discussion group concerning the characteristics and nature of community radio, involving lively discussion amongst a large group of NGOs, AIR personnel, academics, journalists, and community radio broadcasters from all over the world. The debate was initially triggered when this researcher suggested that 'radio is television without pictures'. The main reason for me to consider this 'non vision' as a drawback comes from various discussions I held with remote audiences of rural communities. Although audiences consider radio as an 'intimate

medium' they do feel that at times they miss vision when they listen to radio, especially young people when listening to sports programs, and women when they listen to health programs who said they felt 'the vision was missing on radio'. There is no doubt that the reach, portability, intimacy of radio are added advantages for this medium.

Also from a program production point of view, these two media, radio and television, are different. As Jitendra Raut has noted:

[R]adio is not television without pictures. [This is] because if you add just pictures to a radio programme it does not simply become a suitable television programme. And if you close your eyes while watching TV it does not give you the same feeling and knowledge and information as a radio programme gives (Raut, 2000).

With its visual advantage over radio, television in India was expected to fulfil certain educational needs of the population for example through Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) (see chapter 2). However, the ruling political parties have used Doordarshan to propagate their views to the largely illiterate electorate. Vicky Farmer (Farmer, 2000), argues that television would have been used to promote literacy education in India. However, 'Doordarshan never made any serious attempts in this direction' (Farmer, 2000). Now radio has competition from many other technologies such as terrestrial, cable, and satellite television, videocassette recorder (VCR), cinema, and regional satellite television that broadcast programs in the regional language. To reach audiences successfully, and to survive, radio needs to get closer to the community by producing programs, which are more participatory and interactive in nature. In other words, empowering audiences is the key factor to making this medium more effective among remote and marginalised peoples of India. Program personnel need to prepare themselves to come out of the air-conditioned studios and produce programs in the field. This thesis aims to look at how the tribal communities of the Toda, Kota and Kannikaran use the low power radio stations ORS and NRS in their everyday lives, by following an investigative (probing) qualitative, audience ethnography, method.

Unlike quantitative methods, audience ethnography attempts to understand audiences in their natural everyday domestic lives by observing life style and media behavior. I interviewed and interacted with tribal audiences mostly in their homes and occasionally in the field (*'thottam'*) during their lunch break.

Figure: 1



The researcher interacting with the tribal women (agricultural laborers) during a focus group discussion.

Moore (1996, p.19) defines home 'as a place that has powerful emotional resonances – usually a strong sense of belonging and attachment'. The home is a place where I could contact both the male and female members of the family very easily, and cultivate a rapport with them. This situation also gave me an opportunity to observe where the radio set was kept at home, and how it was moved to other places at different times of the day. I also enquired what programs they listen to and with whom. I sometimes met people, other than in the house, especially young ones in open places, in front of their traditional temples and in their settlements. I utilized this opportunity and arranged focus group interviews with people of similar age and interests. Moore, further defining ethnography, argues, 'it is certainly an attempt to understand how situations are being defined by the participants themselves – to identify contextualised meanings and experiences' (Moore, 1996, p.28). However, it is not always easy to reach these communities because they are remote and there are no proper transport facilities to access them. Also, for ethnographers it is not always easy to access people's homes, as it is their own personal space. Identifying

this as one of the major problems that ethnographers encounter during the process of collecting data, Moores argues, 'firstly, in studying domestic media consumption – or in researching any aspect of daily household life – it should be acknowledged that there are genuine difficulties in gaining sustained access to the space of the home' (Moores, 1996, p.30). Although I did encounter a few problems in accessing tribal audiences, I must admit that, as Moores states, it requires a 'considerable amount of effort and 'emotional labour' (Moores, 1996, p.31).

The fieldwork for the study was conducted among indigenous audiences in two districts of Tamil Nadu: Kanyakumari and the Nilgiris...Kanyakumari is a Southern district in Tamil Nadu. Kannikaran tribal audiences who live in the hill areas of Pechiparai were the subjects of the study. Nilgiris, which means 'Blue Hills', is an area consisting of five indigenous communities including the Todas, Kotas, Kurumbas, Paniyas and Irulas. The Badagas, who have migrated to the Nilgiris, settled along with the other indigenous communities. The study covered the remote communities in the hill areas of the Nilgiris and Kanyakumari district. My empirical investigation followed the form of unstructured interviews and participant observation, and included the discussion of what the audiences had to say about the domestic cultures of radio consumption in their everyday lives.

This thesis aims to critically analyze how tribal audiences used the Neighboring low power radio stations, which included the Nagercoil Radio Station (NRS) and Ooty Radio Station (ORS) of All India Radio. The thesis also explores how these stations ensured audience participation through their respective areas and specific field-based programs.

Despite the fact that India does not have a well-defined policy for indigenous media and audiences, the ORS was introduced in 1994 with the objective of empowering ethnic minorities. The low power status (1KW) and its location in the land of indigenous people enables ORS to function like a 'community radio' in a country where the concept of local or community radio has been defeated (Noronha, 1999). ORS functions like community radio amongst the indigenous audiences of the Nilgiris district and is an exception to the standard regional broadcasting in Southern India. ORS with its well

planned combination of programs, largely field-based and innovative in style, sounds distinctive when compared to other regional radio stations, including the Nagercoil radio station.

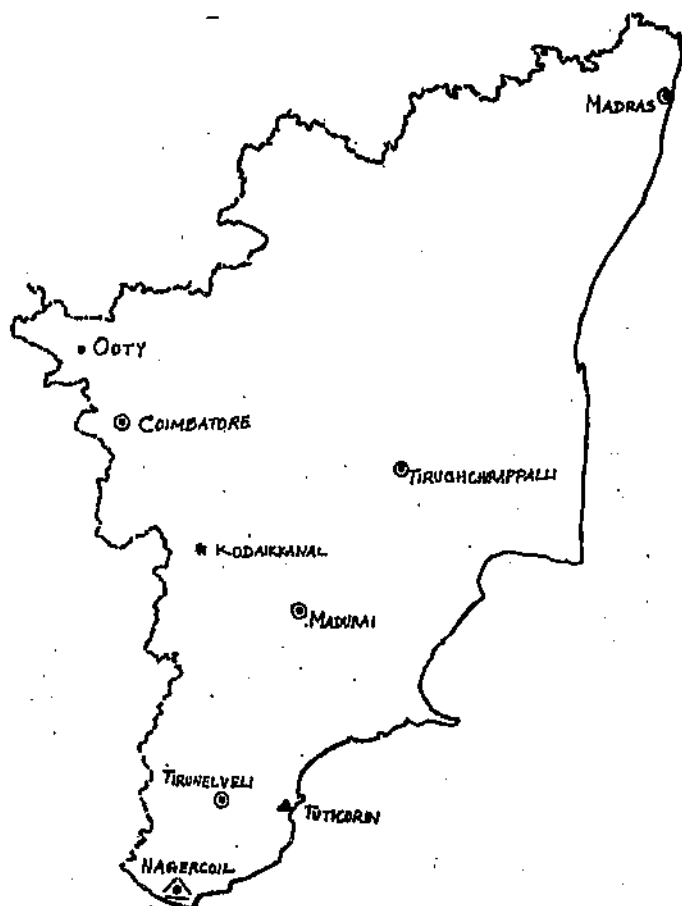
ORS broadcasts programs in the regional Tamil language and reserves a twenty-minute slot for a tribal songs program (*'Malai Aruvi'*) in which indigenous audiences present programs in their own tribal dialect. Unlike the major regional radio stations in Tamil Nadu, which broadcast programs from morning to late night with few breaks, ORS only broadcasts between 5.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. Since ORS broadcasts a range of programs on local culture, the majority of the indigenous audiences tune to this station. My research suggests that the audiences of this region prefer ORS because they feel it is more relevant to their everyday lives.

Programs serve a variety of audiences from youth and teenagers (*'Ilayaragam'*, *'Kalangaraivilakkam'*), children (*'Siruvar Poonga'*), to whole families (*'Iniya Ilam'*). There are programs for upcoming local talents (*'Valarkalai Arangam'*), sports (*'Vilayattarangam'*), local issues (*'Valarum Malayagam'*), village profiles (*'Engal Giramam'*), local news (*'Neelamalai Kathir'*), agriculture (*'Thottamum Thozhilum'*), tribal songs (*'Malai Aruvi'*), folk songs (*'Mannin Menam'*), topical discussions (*'Palingu Mandabam'*) and feed-back (*'Karuthu Madai'*) to mention just a few (Jayaprakash, 2000).

Another important element underlying this thesis is the 'spatial dimension' (McQuail, 1997) of radio listening. The pattern of radio listening and differentiation from other media use, relates to the location, broader patterns of time, lifestyle and everyday routines of the audiences (McQuail, 1997). Settlements that are located near the town and close to the main roads have entirely different patterns of media use to those settlements that are secluded and located far away from the towns. The reasons for this include poor electricity facilities in the households, poverty, and the varied levels of exposure to other media. For example, audiences from 'town settlements' or the settlements that are located near the towns have better access to other mass media like newspapers, cinema and cable television. These varied levels of exposure to other media alter the way audiences use radio in their everyday lives. They negotiate their television watching and

TAMIL NADU

ALL INDIA RADIO STATIONS



radio listening time. Audiences also position their radio sets in different places within their households such as in the kitchen, bedroom, living room, in the open areas for various reasons. They listen to radio at different times of the day for different purposes. I will now briefly outline the data collection process. In collecting my data a small tape recorder was used to record interviews, which was then transcribed for analysis. The transcribed data was then coded and classified based on 'resemblance' or likeness (see, chapter 4).

Thesis Composition

Chapter Two comprises the literature review, and that Chapter Three is devoted to various concepts of the Indian public sphere, Chapter Four reflects upon the way data was collected, Chapter Five explores the importance of gender; Chapter Six develops the ideas in respect to age; Chapter Seven investigates the manner in which radio has impacted upon tribal perceptions of space; Chapter Eight discusses public and commercial broadcasting and Chapter Nine summarizes salient points raised in this thesis.

Chapter Two comprises the Literature Review. Here, important aspects of this research are reviewed. Firstly the review of the literature of tribal communities in the Nilgiris reveals that there is a dearth of literature available on tribal communities, which looks at tribal origins and culture. Studies on how tribal communities use the modern media, such as low power neighboring radio, is almost overlooked. Secondly, radio and development research conducted in India tends to review the research conducted previously by the ARU, which is often quantitative and concentrates more on urban areas than the rural and remote audiences. Thirdly, the nature and characteristics of media and audiences are reviewed.

Chapter Three is devoted to elaborating the concept of the Indian public sphere, and the current community radio movement is discussed. In

this chapter, the role of NGOs in community radio movement, and the difficulties they encounter in obtaining licenses to run community based independent community radio is analyzed. The potential for NGOs to provide program services that are independent of both the state and commercial interests is discussed. The policy of the MIB with regard to NGOs and the regulatory obstacles that are now facing the NGOs that want radio licenses are debated. Finally, how NGOs use other resources and technologies such as the Internet, narrowcasting, and AIR are discussed.

Chapter Four reflects upon the way data was collected using qualitative audience ethnography as a methodology. Apart from looking at the audience analysis in the field of media and cultural studies, fieldwork, data collection, and analysis have been derived.

Chapter Five explores the importance of gender in the formation of remote rural audiences and discusses how tribal men and women differ in the way they use radio using ethnographic data collected in the field. This chapter argues that men prefer to listen to radio news and developmental programs such as agriculture, while women mainly choose to listen to film songs, drama and Christian programs.

Chapter Six develops the ideas discussed in regard to gender and in respect to age. Given the hierarchical nature of tribal society, age is a particularly important variable that motivates and determines radio listening. In this chapter, how children, teen-age boys and girls, and the elderly audiences listen and differ in choosing programs were carefully analyzed from the data collected from interviews, focus groups, participant observation and in-depth interviews.

Chapter Seven investigates the manner in which radio has impacted upon tribal perceptions of space. In short, how radio encourages people in remote communities to construct new senses of reality through the expansion of their horizons. Here the ethnographic data shows how audiences listen to radio at different times of the day at different places of their settlements and households.

Chapter Eight places remote rural radio in the current Indian broadcasting context that is characterized by a dichotomy between public and commercial broadcasting. Here the way the recent exposure to new media like satellite/cable TV alters the radio listening habits is discussed in the context of 'service' programs, and commercial programs, are analyzed.

Chapter Nine: This chapter summarizes most of the salient points and issues raised in this thesis and also answers the research questions.

CHAPTER 2

RADIO AND DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH IN INDIA: A LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This review of literature relevant to the study is structured hierarchically. The major headings refer to the central preoccupations of the thesis while the subheadings refer to specific issues arising from the major foci.

The Major headings are

1. Indian Tribal Society
2. The use of mass media in Rural India
3. The Contemporary Indian Mediascape
4. Decentralisation: Local Radio in India
5. Radio for Development

Indian Tribal Society

Western and Indian anthropologists have investigated the lifestyle and origin of Nilgiris. While these works do not directly address media and communication issues, this prior research provides useful background information such as on traditional beliefs, festivals and lifestyles of the tribal people. In addition the various methods used in these studies provide suggested methods of collecting and analyzing data.

Anthropological methods of data collection were suggested by the social scientists in India through the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) and following the 'growing dissatisfaction with the methodological inadequacies of earlier research and sample surveys of rural India' (see, Agrawal, 1981). The pioneer work on the Todas by W.H.R. Rivers was published in two volumes in 1906 (Rivers, 1986). It describes their customs and beliefs. In the first volume the author discusses Toda culture, ceremonies, deities, language, origin and the role of dairies and buffaloes. In the second, Rivers describes the Toda religion, population, kinship, marriage, ornaments, weapons, their relations with other tribes, and the clans. He also provides a history of Todas. This information provides interesting comparative data. Comparing the Toda people's historical life and their recent life style with their association with the media, especially radio, helps in the evaluation of the role of radio in their everyday life.

Walker (1986) wrote another major work on the Toda, which shows the major reason for the Toda community practicing agriculture was as a result of the decrease in the buffalo population. Several works have been completed on the Nilgiri tribes. Basu (1972), whose work explored Kota's kinship, demography and physical characteristics; Emeneau (1989) a noted linguist, analyses Kota texts, folk tales and phonology; Mandalbaum (1989a) talks in his various works about polyandry in the Kota society and looks at funerals; Hockings's work on Badagas (Hockings, 1989) reveals the cultural changes among the Hindu refugees who also live in the Nilgiri hills.

Anthropologists have concentrated on the traditional media and oral communication including songs, while studying these communities. By contrast, my research explores the role of the mass media in the everyday life of the tribal communities in South India, with a specific focus on radio broadcasting.

The use of mass media in Rural India

In rural India, people have had limited access to mass media (Bhatia, 1992; Gupta, 1996.; Melkote, 1983, 1991; Reddy, 1989; Sanjay, 1996; Singh,

1996; Yadava, 1996). While the circulation of newspapers and magazines in India has increased, most print media are largely available only in the urban centres (Gupta, 1987; Jeffrey, 1994, 1997; Joglekar, 1996; Mohanty, 1983). Yadava (1996, p. 17) argues that 93 per cent of newspaper and magazine circulation is in the large towns and cities. He lists three reasons for the lack availability of newspapers in rural India: low literacy rates (about 51 per cent); low purchasing power (about thirty per cent of the population living below the poverty line), and the poor means of transportation for the timely delivery of newspapers.

Radio has a comparatively better access and reach to the marginalised communities than television in rural India. Both state and central governments in India have no intention of reviving community viewing in rural areas (Sanjay, 1996). In spite of the estimated 60,000 television sets provided in the rural areas, community viewing in rural areas 'continued to be limited'(Yadava, 1996, p. 17). There are many important reasons for the low levels of community television sets in rural India. Singh (1996) points out

The dominant caste pattern of every village controls all access to the mass media, for example the newspaper meant for the Panchayat is acquired by them, the radio sets meant for the use of all villagers get locked up in their houses and the TV sets of the panchayat are never properly operated or repaired in time, since it is only the commoners who go for the community viewing(p. 39).

In order to combat the threat to audience share from the competition posed by satellite and cable television services in India, Doordarshan (hereafter DD) opted to try to maintain its audience share and protect its commercial revenues by broadcasting mainly film-based programs.

[T]he aims of broadcasting in India were set out as education, information and entertainment. But in its desire to compete with foreign television networks and cable operators, our own Doordarshan has put things upside down. In its national and metro channels, the emphasis is on entertainment and that too entertainment of the filmi type (Joglekar, 1996, p. 50).

Joseph (1996) argues that despite the investment in hardware, infrastructure and expansion, only 20 to 25 percent of the India's population

have actual access to television. Furthermore, DD's programs are largely produced to suit the tastes of the urban middle class and upper class (see, Karnard, 1989; Laxman, 1996). Joseph also suggests that radio, with its wider reach and with the availability of low-cost transistor sets could function like a true mass medium among rural communities. Joseph further suggests it could be used as a primary resource for planners and others aiming to disseminate information, education or provide entertainment to the different strata of the society. Kishore's (1994) work alerts policy makers to the fact that audiences in India are frustrated with DD's limited program choices. Girish Karnard, an actor, playwright and director of television serials, argued that television in India functions like a government apparatus. Karnad (1989, p. 351) observed that:

TV [is] controlled by educated middle class bureaucrats programmed by educated middle- class bureaucrats, sensitive to comments by educated middleclass critics, and geared to urban white- collar tastes [...].

Radio, by contrast, because of its characteristics of cheapness and portability, is widely available in rural India. The low power radio stations located in the small towns have shifted their approach and realized the importance of audience participation in their programs (Anjaneyalu, 1989; Fisher, 1989). Gupta (1996) argues that radio was established as a potential medium for rural development by informing audiences of new practices in agriculture. He points out that '...many of the crop varieties are known in villages at some places as 'radio varieties' (Gupta, 1996, p.5). Furthermore, he says that the non-availability of power supply during the farm broadcasts prevented villagers in Haryana from watching agricultural programs on television. He also added that people learnt recent practices of agriculture from radio rather than television because programs were broadcast at the appropriate time on radio and were more directly relevant to the local field operations. On the other hand, television programs are predominantly studio-based and more useful to wealthier farmers than the poorer farmers.

[R]adio was noted to be a more credible source of agricultural information even in those households which had a TV set, primarily because the programs were scheduled at more

convenient timings, were regular and most of them were directly concerned with field operations (Gupta, 1996., p. 6).

Poor farmers and agricultural laborers need information and advice quickly and cheaply. While illiteracy and lack of educational background prevent them from using other forms of communication, radio provides information very effectively (Mouli, 1995; Ramash, 1995). Reddi (1989, p. 405) argues that, in India radio and film are the two most important media. Reddi says that the print medium is ruled out because of its limited reach to illiterate people and the fact that television is still growing in India. Traditional media, Reddy argues, lack speed in conveying information to rural people. Thus, it is radio and film that are 'truly mass media in India and, by implication, purveyors of cultural values'.

Cinema is available in rural areas of South India and is very popular (Dickey, 1993). However, it is beyond the scope of this thesis to analyze the impact of film on rural India. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that the remote communities that I have selected for this study, Toda, Kota and Kannikaran, have limited access to cinemas because of the distance involved in getting to the nearest cinema. India is the largest film-producing country in the world, and annually over 900 films are produced there. However, Yadava (1996, p. 17) argues that cinema houses are mostly located in the cities and towns. He further adds 'the cinema houses in the country are limited, about 11,200 with approximately 11.5 lakh seats i.e., 7.4 seats for 1000 population'. Indian development theorists also argue that, apart from radio, mass media in India currently represents a 'class phenomenon' rather than a 'mass phenomenon' (Reddy, 1989).

The Contemporary Indian Mediascape

One of the central themes of this thesis is that India has a changing and expanding contemporary mediascape. In order to make sense of the media use and everyday life the media and cultural theorists such as Alasuutari (1996; 1999), Lull (1990; 1991), Morley (1980; 1986; 1992), Silverstone (1993) and others have been drawn on for clarification.

Nightingale (1989), while emphasizing the need for a shift in ethnographic audience research in cultural studies concludes that 'it is time to look again at anthropology and at ethnographic research techniques, to re-evaluate their use in cultural studies audience research both as a heritage and as a future direction' (Nightingale, 1989, p.62). Other works that have shaped the approach to data collection and analysis for this study include Fetterman (1989), Lindlof (1991), Lunt & Livingstone (1996), Morgan (1993), Spradely (1980) and so on.

Spitulnik (1993), after reviewing the studies in the field of anthropology and mass media, argues that the 'intersection' of these areas 'appear rather small'. Considering Spitulnik's observation on the lack of research in the field of 'media anthropology', this research aims to address this gap. Ethnographic method has been used in cultural studies since early 1980s. As McEachern (1998, p.251) argues 'Anthropology and Cultural studies share a concern with ethnographic method. Cultural studies increasingly uses ethnography in its analyses of popular culture as it seeks to balance earlier preoccupation with text'. This thesis is influenced by the perspective developed by cultural theorists such as Hall, Willis and Morely who see ethnography as an important tool for cultural analysis. However, one distinctive feature of this thesis is that, for the first time, the way in which tribal audiences in the Nilgiri hills use mass media in their everyday lives is explored.

The significance of the audience in the context of communication and communication theory (De Fleur, 1975; Kim & Rubin, 1997; McQuail, 1997; Renckstorf, McQuail, & Jankowski, 1996; Windahl, Signitzer, & Olson, 1992; Wren-Lewis, 1983) and of radio audiences in India is important because qualitative audience research on remote audiences is limited and largely ignored by the audience research unit of AIR and amongst other researchers. Gupta (1984, p.76) emphasizes the importance of audience research, especially in developing countries, stating that 'audiences there [in developing countries] are relatively less homogenous, more culturally diverse and at varying levels of media exposure'. In the Indian context, audience research on radio audiences is largely quantitative rather than qualitative. Commenting on the audience research in India, Gupta observes that 'the

general situation on audience research is far from satisfactory' (Gupta, 1984, p.78). In India the media is expected to respond to the need for developmental programs from the audiences. Consequently audience analysis (McQuail, 1997) can be potentially important. Gupta observes in his summing up that 'people read, listen and view what interests them, and not necessarily what should interest them'. Radio has recently been acknowledged as an important medium for development because it has a wider reach, easier access in the rural areas and its programs are area specific (Gupta, 1996.; Joseph, 1996; Melkote, 1991; Yadava, 1996). Increasingly, radio stations in rural areas have come to realize the importance of audience participation and producing programs that are relevant to their audiences (Anjaneyalu, 1989; Gupta, 1996.).

At another level India introduced a number of committees of inquiry (MIB, 1966, 1978) to review the broadcasting scenario with particular reference to electronic media and development. A grasp of the role of audiences in this scenario has proved crucial to their respective findings and recommendations. After explaining the drawbacks of the rural programs, the Chanda Committee emphasized that, 'above all, there is no research to ascertain the taste of rural listeners' (MIB, 1966, p.126). Again the report says, 'All India Radio has made no attempt to ascertain the needs and tastes of rural listeners' (MIB, 1966, 137). The Verghese Committee (MIB, 1978, p.58) also mentioned that 'audience research is a neglected area in the present broadcasting system'. The special characteristics of the nature of audiences have demanded different approaches in broadcasting policy and research. Chapter four of the Verghese committee report (MIB, 1978) argues:

The most outstanding characteristics of this audience is its tremendous heterogeneity. This heterogeneity is seen in the wide range of languages and dialects, religious beliefs and special customs, political ideologies, ethnic origins levels of development and literacy, agro climatic conditions, degrees of urbanization and so on. No broadcasting organisation in the world has to reach and interact with such a diversity of people in India (p.28).

Development broadcasting began in 1935 to inform audiences about agriculture, health, education and population control. In discussing the role of radio for development, Gupta & Aggarwal (1996, p. 99) observe : 'As a tool for development, radio continues to remain unsurpassed because of its easy accessibility, cost effectiveness and localness of the medium'. Since television is being driven more and more by advertising and market forces, the objective of using it as a tool for development has been ignored for a long time. A stage has been reached where the pretence of using television for development is no longer being maintained. In such a situation it would be once again important to underline the importance of radio for development (Reddy, 1989).

The realization that radio (AIR) and television (DD) in India have to adopt new techniques in order to sustain their audiences in this age of globalization is becoming more widespread. At the time of Independence in 1947 there were only six radio stations in India. The network expanded gradually and at present AIR has nearly 200 radio stations consisting of national, regional and local broadcasting. Autonomy for the electronic media has been discussed since Independence but the politicians insisted that their interest was in functional autonomy, but not real autonomy (Thomas, 1990). After a long struggle for media autonomy (Reeves, 1994), 'Prasar Bharati' Act was enacted in 1990 and implemented in 1997. This act provided for the autonomous status of electronic media in India. This change seems to be more apparent than real. Interviews for this study revealed that many program officers who work in the AIR stations of Tamil Nadu suggested that media autonomy is in a 'transition' period in India. It will take considerable time for the staff to realize that there is a real freedom to broadcast, and for them to explore and develop these new conditions. However, a few program officers realized the change in administration and acted a little more freely than before. At this time of change in administration, research on 'radio and remote audiences' is significant.

The Radio Club of Bombay pioneered radio broadcasting in India in 1923 followed by the Calcutta Radio club and the Madras Presidency radio Club. Due to a financial crisis, these clubs gave up broadcasting in 1930. In

the same year, a private company, Indian Broadcasting Company was formed with stations in Bombay and Calcutta (Rao, 1986). The then Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, inaugurated the Bombay station. As a result of a financial crisis, the Indian Broadcasting Company went into liquidation in 1930. Later, in 1935 the Government of India took over the task of broadcasting and formed the Indian State Broadcasting Service. In the next two years, the number of radio sets in India increased to 1, 600. This was largely because of the increase in ownership of radio sets by upper class Indians and Europeans. This encouraged the Government to start broadcasting on a planned basis.

In 1935, Mr. Lionel Fielden from BBC, was appointed as the first controller of the Broadcasting Company in India. In 1936, the Indian State Broadcasting Company was renamed All India Radio (AIR). In the years that followed, central news organizations and external services were set up. By the time the Second World War broke out in 1939, India had a proper broadcasting service catering to over 100, 000 radio license holders in the country (1966). In 1983, there were 8, 933,164 radio licenses and 2, 783, 370 television licenses. In 1985, license fees on radio and television sets were abolished.

Initially AIR was under the Department of Industries and Labor. In 1937, it was placed under the control of the Department of Communication and in 1941-it came under the jurisdiction of the Department of Information and Broadcasting. At the time of Independence in 1947 there were six radio stations in India. They were located in Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Tiruchirapalli and Lucknow. After Independence, the AIR network gradually expanded.

India adopted its first five-year Plan for the planned progress of the country in 1951. In this plan, a large sum of money was allocated to the development of radio broadcasting in order to improve socio-economic conditions.

Table 1: Plan Allocation on radio broadcasting during successive developmental plans

Plan	Period	Rs in crores (1crore=10 million)
First plan	1951-1956	4.94
Second plan	1956-61	8.00
Three Annual Plans	1961-66	14.00
Third Five Year Plan	1966-69	14.67
Fourth Five Year Plan	1969-74	40.00
Fifth Five Year Plan	1974-78	26.60
Two Annual Plans	1978-80	23.12
Sixth Five Year Plan	1980-85	85.20
Seventh Five year Plan	1985-90	660.50
Two Annual Plans	1990-92	400.00
Eighth Five Year Plan	1992-97	835.32
Ninth Five Year Plan	1997-2002	848.34

Note: A\$1= Rs. 27

Source: http://air.kode.net/plan_allo.html

In 1956, at the end of the first five-year Plan, AIR had twenty-five stations covering 31 per cent of the country's spatial area and 46 per cent of its population. During this period, national programming of music and talk was also introduced. In 1961, at the end of the second five-year Plan, AIR had reached 55 per cent of the population and 37 per cent of the country's

area. During this period, the number of radio receiver licenses also increased to 2, 142, 754.

Radio Ceylon (Sri Lanka) became popular because it introduced film music which posed a challenge to the popularity of AIR. This was because AIR policy at that time was mainly focused on pro-developmental programs. Therefore, in 1957, a variety program of light listening, 'Vividh Bharathi', was introduced on AIR. In the same year, Radio Rural Forum was also introduced. This initiative created an opportunity for the farmers to discuss farm programs and send clear feedback about the programs to the radio stations. The main idea was to establish a two-way communication flow and to bring villages into the program planning process.

During the third five-year Plan (1961–1966) medium wave and short wave transmitters were expanded. At the end of the plan, there were 82 medium wave and 28 short wave transmitters. At this time, the medium wave programs were available to three-quarters of the population and reached about 60 per cent of the country's area. The following Five-Year Plans paved the way for increasing the number of radio stations in India.

Since radio had reached a saturated level on the AM network during the eighties, AIR started a FM network mainly for the implementation of local radio in the smaller towns of India. On 31 March 1995, there were 177 broadcasting centers, with 105 regional radio stations and 65 local radio stations. They covered 97 per cent of the Indian population and 90 per cent of the geographical area. There are now estimated 111 million radio sets distributed among 104 million households. AIR broadcasts programs in 24 languages and 146 dialects, catering to the needs of 930 million people in India. The low power transmitters are intended for local or community radio broadcasting and the medium and high power transmitters are mainly used for regional and national broadcasting.

The colonial legacy of centralized broadcasting does not make radio broadcasting an effective way of communicating with the diverse population of India (Eapen, 1995). The decentralization of broadcasting subsequently occurred because radio in India had to disseminate messages and programs

to its diverse audiences, who lived over a widespread area. On the other hand, decentralized broadcasting helped to reach rural people and poorer sections of the society. The poor farmers and agricultural laborers needed information and advice frequently and cheaply. But illiteracy and lack of educational backgrounds did not allow them to use other forms of communications (Mouli, 1995). Radio could provide information cheaply and also frequently (Ramesh, 1995).

Decentralization: Local Radio in India

One of the most important aspects of the contemporary Indian mediascape is the introduction of local radio or District Level Radio (DLR) in rural India. It is recognized as having the potential to radically alter the relations between broadcasters and the listeners, AIR and the regions, public and private broadcasting and the use of media for development. The majority of the population in India live in villages and their liking and interests are diverse and different from city dwellers. Hence, It is important for local radio to identify the problems, needs and expectations of the people who make up their audiences. This is easier when a broadcast is directed towards a few villages that have common problems and needs. Here the rural broadcasters can create an intimacy with the local populace so that two-way communication is achieved and the audience participation in feedback is enhanced. In this way mutual communication can take place between poor, illiterate and underprivileged people and the government. This concept is crucial because a very large number of people, especially from the interior villages, hill areas, and secluded regions, still consider radio as a good companion and an important source of information and entertainment. In these areas, community radio could inform, motivate and generate various innovative ideas amongst the people for the benefit of the community (Mouli, 1995). Moreover, this will pave the way for well-informed public opinion, which is the foundation for every democratic society. Rural broadcasting is perceived to be an important source of information for farmers and rural people. Millions of farmers and fishermen rely on radio for the frequency and immediacy of meteorological forecasts which are crucial to them (MIB, 1978).

In order to analyze previous research conducted in this area, the researcher reviewed the Audience Research Unit's (South Zone) research reports. The Audience Research Unit (ARU) is the sole research wing in the AIR organization. They conduct research in order to recommend policy, program structure, the nature of audiences, audiences needs and so on. To analyze audience feedback this unit has been conducting a similar type of research survey by employing part-time investigators. They are generally unemployed youths and university students, who have little or no background in audience research. This results in poor methods and standards of data collection and analysis. This type of survey method and quantitative analysis does not accurately reflect audience opinions, because of the diversified and complex nature of the audiences.

Radio in India could serve its underprivileged, downtrodden, rural poor better because of its low cost nature and enormous capacity to reach these audiences. In the rapidly changing mediascape of India it is now necessary to adopt a suitable method of audience research.

In 1990 the Audience Research Unit (ARU) conducted a 'feed – forward' study for the community radio station at Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh, South India. Tirupathi and 40 villages situated within the primary service area of the temporary transmitter of the Tirupathi radio station were selected at random. The sample size was 600 people in the urban areas and 400 people in the rural areas. According to the report, the audiences were unable to answer the question relating to how community radio could improve the quality of the programs (1990b).

ARU also organized a study of listening trends in Pondicherry, a Union Territory in India. The survey of general listening was conducted in the town of Pondicherry and 20 surrounding villages. The results revealed that the majority of people listened to radio between 6 am and 8 am in the morning. Moreover, the listening was very high among the urban (86 percent) and rural (84 per cent) population. However, in this study, 400 respondents were selected from urban areas and only 200 were selected from rural areas (A.R.U., 1995).

General listening surveys of Madurai and Pasumpon Muthuramalingam Thevar districts were conducted in March 1991. A structured interview schedule was administered to collect data from 898 respondents. Again in this study, the majority of the sample were selected from urban areas. About 93 per cent of the total respondents reported listening to radio at least once a week. The people of the Madurai region tuned into the radio mostly for film music, news, devotional music, plays, folk music and so on.

The Audience Research Unit directed a 'feed - forward' study at Cannanore, in the southern state of Kerala. A total of 1000 respondents were selected randomly for the fieldwork. Among the 1000 respondents, 600 were selected from urban areas and 400 from rural areas. The study found that the listening was higher between 6 am and 7 am in the morning (66.1 per cent) than between 7 and 8 am (55.8 per cent) (A.R.U., 1990a).

The review of these ARU studies revealed the limitations of audience research conducted in South India.

First Local Radio Station in India: Nagercoil

Most of the audience studies conducted by AIR were essentially quantitative and focused on urban India. A rural study (Jayaprakash, 1993) conducted on Nagercoil Radio Station (NRS), which is the first ever local radio station of AIR, revealed a number of important issues. The main objectives of the study were:

1. To provide basic information about local needs, expectations and problems;
2. To formulate the listeners preferences of programs, formats, radio stations, and peak listening times;
3. To assess the current radio listening habits of the people, and the extent of their exposure to other mass media in villages and towns.

The data was collected by survey method, 100 respondents comprising seventy-five from rural areas and twenty-five from urban areas

were contacted in person, mostly in their homes. The main outcomes of the study were:

1. In the coverage area of AIR Nagercoil, general listening to radio had been found to be very high. Meanwhile, regular listening was higher in villages (91 per cent) than urban and semi urban-areas. Generally, the medium is used for information and entertainment. More than fifty per cent of the agriculturist community considered radio to be an information medium;
2. It has been found that most of the respondents listened to radio along with their family members;
3. Among the respondents 90 per cent possessed radio sets but just 38 per cent owned television sets;
4. Among the respondents, radio got the highest exposure, 91 per cent followed by film (79 per cent), newspaper (68 per cent), TV (67 per cent) and magazines (58 per cent). But among the urban respondents, magazine has the highest exposure (92 per cent). This clearly shows that radio is a very amiable and intimate medium preferred by the rural folk;
5. Urban respondents outnumbered the rural respondents in mass media exposure, except in radio listening. This is because the influence of television on radio listening has made urbanites ignore their radio sets (see, Sud, 1990);
6. A significant outcome of this study was that respondents between 15–30 years of age have 100 per cent radio listening;
7. Except for radio it has been found that, other mass media such as television, films, magazines, and newspapers, the higher the family income, the higher the mass media exposure;
8. No other mass media reaches the illiterate and those educated at below high school level to the same extent as radio does. The question raised is whether and how radio might be used more advantageously for the benefit and improvement of rural audiences.

Even though the study brought out many important issues, the methods of data collection and analysis used in this study and those studies conducted by the audience research unit, did not reveal the important social and cultural issues that confront radio listening, audience participation, models of listening, and the future of radio in South India. The survey method was used to collect data and hence the social, cultural dynamics of radio listening were ignored. Hence, a new approach, which critically analyzes radio use in South India, is needed. It is also important to see how radio broadcasting serves its audiences in other developing countries in Asia.

These reviews of audience research reports inform us that radio listening is comparatively high in the morning. Audiences appear to prefer mostly music and news from radio. However, quantitative research does not reveal why and how they prefer radio in the morning and under what circumstances they listen to radio as a group or individually. Even though these reports tell us about the portion of audiences that listen to certain programs, the findings do not reveal the basic questions of how audiences like to use this medium in the context of their everyday lives. Moreover, mostly quantitative methods were adopted to collect data and urban audiences were largely included, rather than the rural audiences. Above all, tribal audiences were completely ignored by the ARU of AIR and consequently this project was initiated to concentrate on the tribal and rural audiences.

Radio for Development

The use of radio for development has been one of the principal functions of the medium in India. The major aim of this section is to review development in the context of India and an attempt has been made to review the Asian development scholars' particularly Indian theorists. The review mainly criticised the failure of dominant paradigm 'due to its 'top down' approach and advocated bottom-up and 'horizontal' approach as suggested by Indian development theorists Bella Mody (Mody, 1991, 1992) and Srinivas Melkote (Melkote, 1983, 1991).

One of the most important work on media and development in Asia is Dissanayake (1981) who suggests four approaches for development and communication:

1. Top down approach of media use;
2. Decentralized planning of media;
3. Interpersonal channels;
4. Bottom up approach with audience participation;

Dissanayake (1981) defines development as:

The process of social change which has as its goal the improvement in the quality of life of all or the majority of the people without doing violence to the natural and cultural environment in which they exist and which seeks to involve the generality of the people as closely as possible in this enterprise, making them the masters of their own destiny (Dissanayake, 1981, p. 217).

In his definition Dissanayake establishes that development is not directly economic growth, but more towards the social change that occurs in people's way of life without affecting the environment that they live in. At the same time Dissanayake also establishes the first approach as the dominant paradigm that evolved in the 1950s and 1960s. In this approach more emphasis was laid on centralized planning and intensive technology. This model was discussed in Wilbur Schramm's (1964) *Mass media and National Development*, Daniel Leamer's (1958) *The Passing of Traditional Society* (1958) and Pye's (1963) *Communication and Political Development*.

These writers have strongly supported the view that the mass media could bring development to impoverished countries. In the early 1970s it was realized that the strategy of disseminating new knowledge, skills, and the essence of development through mass media, was not successful. Dissanayake argued that due to this approach towards media, 'the gap between the rich and the poor in the less developed countries began to widen' (Dissanayake, 1981, p. 219). Dissanayake also argues that the major problem with this old paradigm is that the main emphasis concentrated on the communicator (mass media) and not the recipients, the audiences.

Hence this approach was essentially a top down approach that took little note of people's opinions in the planning process. This model ignored the historical background and cultural differences in the developing countries because it was exclusively a Western model of experience.

The second approach discussed by Dissanayake concentrates more on decentralized planning and focuses on the quality of life. Even though the channel was given high priority, the audiences were not considered. When Dissanayake discusses the third approach, he cites Nordenstreng & Schiller (1979) and adds:

It seems to me that the supporters of the third approach to development communication emphasise the interpersonal channels. The argument seems to be that mass media systems in the developing countries are caught up in the dependency relationship, and at times are active supporters of it (Dissanayake, 1981, p. 223).

The factors that emerged from the fourth approach on communication and development are: 1. Popular participation; 2. Grassroots development; 3. Integrated village development; 4. Use of appropriate technology; 5. Fulfillment of basic needs; 6. Productive use of local resources; 7. Maintenance of the ecological balance; 8. Development problems to be defined by the people themselves; and 9. Culture as a mediating force in development (Dissanayake, 1981, p. 224). In this paradigm self-reliance is achieved through participation with others leading to self-fulfillment at individual, local, regional and national level. Dissanayake argues that in developing countries, for any development project to succeed, people's participation is important. He argues further that a development strategy, which stresses self-reliance, must put the highest premium on popular participation' (p. 225). Finally, Dissanayake concludes that the integrated approach is a prerequisite for success. However, he argues that people at the grass root level should participate in planning developmental activities and it should not be dictated from the top. He also stresses the importance of the interpersonal channels to make communication strategies successful.

Table 2: Development Model

	Main Emphasis	Means	Communication Channel	Function of Communication Channel
Approach 1	Economic growth	Capital Intensive Technology Industrialisation Centralised planning	Mass Media	Mobilisation of people for Development
Approach 2	Social growth	Labour Intensive Technology Integration of Traditional and modern systems- decentralised planning	Mass Media And Interpersonal channels	Facilitation of Information Exchange Related to Development
Approach 3	Structural Transformation Of society	Elimination of Dependency Relationships	Mainly Interpersonal Channels	Education of Masses Leading to a new awareness
Approach 4	Self-Development	Harnessing Local Resources – Self- Reliance	Mainly Interpersonal Channels with support of Mass Media	Forging of Common Identity and encouragement of Participation Through Emphasis on Shared Values Experience

Source: Dissanayake (1981, p. 226).

Media and development has been a major topic of discussion in India. India has generated its own development and media theorists (Bhaumik, 1996; Gupta, 1984., 1987, 1996.; Joglekar, 1996; Joseph, 1996; Melkote, 1983, 1991; Rajasundaram, 1981; Yadava, 1996) who have been influential in at least two main ways. First, they have argued particularly for radio to be used for development in India. Second, they compared radio and television as a medium for development and argued that radio has enormous potential to enhance and promote development activities in rural India. Yadava (1996) argues that development in India is very slow and the benefits of development have only so far reached the upper section of the society. Yadava also believes that communication is a priority and necessary in order to achieve development.

One of the problems Yadava (1996) perceives is that even though the communication system (including mass media) have rapidly expanded since independence, it is inaccessible to the poorer sections of the society in

villages, where the majority of the population live. Indian society today remains a pyramid, with a very small minority of the elite enjoying the benefits of development, and a very large majority of the poor masses being deprived of adequate opportunities including access to the media and education. Yadava adds that 'extending communication in all its varied trends – from a minority to all population – is a priority in any scheme of social development' (Yadava, 1996, p.18).

Apart from access, Yadava (1996) stresses the importance of relevance of contents. Due to the high rate of illiteracy and poor means of transportation, Yadava states that 'mass media is largely serving the 'not-so-poor' among the urban people'. Yadava also criticizes the mass media in India, saying that it provides 'glib' entertainment and fails to communicate with its audiences who are in need of information and educational programs. He criticized the dominant paradigm, which was a failure due to its 'top down' approach. Yadava suggests that participatory communication (Patil, 1985; Sahu, 1996; Stuart, 1994; Varghese, 1995; Yadava, 1996) is essential to make development fast enough and communication an essential component to achieve participation. Participatory communication is, as Agrawal (1994, p.389) argues, an alliance between communicator and the receiver in which mass media can mirror the problems of the poor'. ORS in the Nilgiris encourage audience participation in their cultural and agricultural programs so that the issues are dealt at the grassroots level rather than from a top-down approach.

Nowadays mass media in India tends to be a top-down phenomenon (Melkote, 1983, 1991; Mody, 1991, 1992), rather than a bottom up approach. Yadava considers Radio Rural Forum as a successful approach where participation was enhanced (see, Chowla, 1989). However, the participation of listeners was 'diluted' and due to this, radio nowadays functions like a 'one way transmission rather than a two-way communication. Yadava supports the revival of community viewing, listening, and reading in rural areas, so that the participation in developmental activities can be achieved. Yadava concludes that it is important to be clear in development and communication objectives in order to enhancing overall development.

Vyas (1986) discusses a radio experiment (action research) that was conducted in 1982 in India. UNICEF in India with the co-operation from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and the Ministry of Social and Women's Welfare initiated a field-based experiment. The project focussed on 'The first Year of a Child's life'. The main objective of this project being to educate rural families about child health. The project used radio as a medium to disseminate messages to rural families. The families in rural areas and semi-urban areas are largely unaware of some of the services available in child health. The project was also used to inform some of the incorrect notions and misconceptions on health and nutrition practices. The objective of the project was also to inform the grassroots level workers who directly contact people about up-to-date information on childcare. Radio stations from different regions of India also participated in the project.

The project also got the support of state government departments such as Social Welfare, Health and Rural Development as well as non-governmental organizations. The workshops were invariably conducted in the regional language. The program producers from AIR and grassroots level workers ranging from 50 to 90 people attended the workshop. The participants were divided into small groups of eight to ten persons in a group. The programs were produced with prior preparation on message content, format and audience profile. At the beginning of the radio workshop on the first day an audience profile was prepared in order to know the 'prevailing knowledge' of the audiences from the selected villages. This profile helped them to prepare the program content to be directly relevant and appropriate for the audiences. The second and third day of the workshop were spent with the audiences, studying their demographic characteristics. Programs were then produced and tested in order to know the comprehensibility of the messages. The problems identified from the villages were sufficiently incorporated in to the message content and produced in such a way that it could be then widely accepted by the audiences. The programs produced based on this workshop were successfully broadcast from the fifty-two radio stations of AIR as a series of health programs.

Bhaumik (1996) argued that AIR talks down to its listeners instead of talking to them. Bhaumik, the then Director- General of the news services division of AIR, strongly criticized the way AIR reported development news, especially from rural areas. Bhaumik, having strong experience in news and electronic media in India, spent more than thirty years in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB). He has rich experience in the news section of AIR and Doordarshan (DD). He argued that, apart from educating people through formal educational, agricultural, literacy, and health programs, mass media could inform their audiences and stimulate the climate for development.

Bhaumik (1996) argues that there are two basic 'fallacies' in the role of communication and development in India. Firstly, he argues that in India, the classification of audiences as either city-based elite and 'rural – mass' was wrong. There are so many divisions within the rural society such as caste, religion and so on. He points out that in the early 1980s the developmental campaigns, based on the 'two-step flow' model helped only the elite of the upper section of the society rather than the poorer people. Secondly, he argues that the idea developed, based on the 'top-down' model that audiences were passive, led to the injection of developmental messages without considering the different strata of the society. He also points out that, a universal solution and model for development cannot be applicable to the rural societies in India because local conditions are entirely different and too complicated. He also notes that the Government of India had realized this and introduced decentralized planning through 'Panchayati Raj', which assists in giving power to the rural people in planning, thus enhancing the 'bottom up' model. He argues that AIR news reports largely rely on the official version rather than on the ordinary rural public opinion and insisted that the development story should not just project government plans to the audiences. In other words, it should reflect the grassroots reality and problems (see, Rajasundaram, 1981).

While emphasizing the importance of the 'follow up' of news stories, Bhaumik, suggested that it is also important for the development story correspondent to go to the field after a few months progress to check out how

the Government programs are functioning. He emphasized that the mass media in India go more by the official version of developmental stories rather than reporting from the people's point of view. For example, correspondents report how many thousands of rupees are spent on a project, rather than following the projects effectiveness in that region. He pointed out that the national news is largely concentrated on the happenings of parliament and the state assemblies. Since the early 1970s, News Services Divisions (NSD) of AIR have part time correspondents who were recruited from the local areas so that they could report local stories efficiently. According to Bhaumik, this change had not become 100 per cent successful, because, as he stated, 'our regional news units are ill-equipped and understaffed to make good use of these correspondents' (Bhaumik, 1996, p.10). Finally, he concludes that it is essential that the correspondents of the respective regions are aware of the people's culture, language and conflicts in that region. Above all, instead of only city-based reporting, it is also important to interact with the rural people and report development stories. He ends his argument by saying, 'Otherwise in our ignorance, we will end up broadcasting development stories which will do more harm than good to the people they are targeted at' (Bhaumik, 1996, p.11).

Joglekar (1996) criticized the print medium and electronic media in India and discussed how the former are in the hands of private owners and published largely from the cities and towns, and how they ignore development news stories, and that their main motive is to gain profit. Secondly, he argued that the print medium is ignoring development news, and reaches the cities and towns, but not villages. As electronic media in India was Government-controlled for many years, broadcasts were largely of Government activities. However, radio with its cheap cost and wider reach is considered a primary source of information for many in India. He added that by increasing field-based programs radio could become a two-way communication, giving rural audiences more opportunity to participate in programs. Sahu (1996), argues that interpersonal and informal communication in rural areas is more effective than the mass media. According to him, mass media in India has problems in the areas of

comprehension and relevance. Most of the developmental programs, he argues, are incomprehensible to rural audiences. Based on his research conducted in a village in Orissa, Sahu argues that the various developmental programs, initiated through government officials, were more successful than mass media.

Melkote (1983; 1991) argues that in the dominant paradigm of the 1960s the messages were often flown from the top level authorities to the grass root level. This was regarded as a western model and was not suitable for developing nations. In the 1970s an alternative model which encouraged the 'bottom-up' approach was developed. In this approach, true participation from the grass roots level was followed. This model demonstrated decentralization and participation, which are considered more relevant to the third world countries. Oliveira (1993) differentiates between the concept of development communication and development support communication. Development communication being mostly centered with a top-down approach, using big media as a source of communication that concentrates on the macro issues, whereas development support communication focuses on the micro issues, using little media and interpersonal channels at the grass roots level. He also discusses the role of communication in agricultural development and considered communication as a developmental tool. He argues that the 'communication in development' process helped to disseminate messages to the farmers and, more importantly, brought out messages from the farmers and facilitated discussion amongst them and with extension (government agricultural officers) campaigners. He cited Coldevin (1987, p. 4) as having quoted that development communication is; 'the systematic utilization of appropriate communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform, motivate, and train rural populations, mainly at the grassroots levels' (Coldevin, 1987 in; Oliveira, 1993).

Hassan & Zakariah (1993) conducted research on audience participation in community radio. Their study focussed on Seremban local radio in Malaysia and discussed that listening to radio was very high among rural people. But the audience participation represented through feed back

was very low. The research revealed that the audience involvement in program production was even lower. The reasons for this low participation by the community were due to number of factors. There was a lack of access to telephone facilities, a lack of time to participate, poor reception of the signals and radio messages, which were not relevant to audiences needs. These findings are also relevant to the media in rural India. Rajasundaram (1981) suggests that the electronic media in India tends to report its messages so that the government looks good. He warns that this has had serious consequences towards the educational content of the media, as well for political objectives. Consequently, he argues that it is wiser not to underestimate the knowledge of illiterate rural audiences, suggesting that apart from educating and informing the audiences, it is also important to entertain the public. He says sometimes radio may inform but most of the time it must entertain (Rajasundaram, 1981, p.6).

AIR has realized the importance of entertaining audiences by broadcasting film songs, folk songs, classical music, western music and so on. However, the farm and home programs are more likely to give instructions to target audiences who are largely illiterate in rural and tribal areas. Its advantages lie more in accessibility and local relevance, and thus help to develop a mutual dialogue between the broadcasters and audiences. While discussing the nature of mass media and audiences in India Bhaumik (1996, p. 11) argues:

It is true that radio/television is essentially a one-way communication. We decide about what to broadcast and when to broadcast without bothering much about the audience reaction. And since the audience has no way of communicating with us, barring the occasional letters, we live in a world of make-believe thinking that whatever we broadcast/ telecast is right for them and they will accept it. I think the time has come to change this mind-set altogether.

Many of the audiences who sent letters to the radio station felt that AIR staff usually chose letters that appreciated the program and tended to ignore letters that carried criticisms. On the other hand, audiences also tended to 'praise' the content so that their letters would be read during the feed back program. It is also important to consider the nature of media

messages in the context of rural India. In order to create interest amongst the rural audiences, the messages should be relevant to the audiences and also address the needs of the people, apart from just entertaining its audiences.

Melkote (1991), suggests that localization of programming is important so that it would be convenient to address the needs of rural audiences by including local issues such as water supply, agricultural information, health and so on. He argues that radio programs discussing the above-mentioned issues, should be, he says '... preferably within the local context and preferably in the local language'. On the part of the producers this requires a solid knowledge of the local situation, a mastering of the local language; and empathy with the local audience (Melkote, 1991, p.142). Mouli (1995) argues that while people from interior villages consider radio as an important source of information, radio could also inform, motivate and innovative ideas for development. While discussing proportion of the rural messages he argued that the messages meant for rural audiences are often insufficient and hard to comprehend. It was emphasized that different communities and individuals often need different approaches to development.

Dissanayake (1981) suggests that it is important that the content of the message, suitability of the broadcast time, and the format for the program presentation also need to be tested before broadcasting. When the program content is planned, it is essential to include the immediate concerns of the population rather than long term or national problems. It is also important to see that the messages are as relevant to the poor farmers as the rich farmers. Sanjay (1996) argues that the rural messages are more useful to the rich farmers than the poor. Yadava (1996) also says 'It will not be incorrect to say that mass media in India is essentially class media' (p.17). While discussing the mass media's inability to bring development in India he argued that 'the media themes and ethos are those of the urban middle classes' (Yadava, 1996, p.18). Gupta (1996) argues that radio is the most suitable media for rural development in India. He added that the factors for the lack of progress related to rural development are: 1. Bureaucratic approach to programs; 2. Poor coordination between different departments

and agencies of the government;;3. Rigid uniformity even under vastly differing conditions and 4. Lack of grass roots participation. Singh (1996) argued that media in India has helped to disseminate messages on various developmental programs to the rural audiences. Sanjay (1996) opines that the mass media in India is only a necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition for development.

Windahl et al.,(1992) discuss various issues relating to media audiences and messages. They emphasize that 'selectivity' is an important concept in the nature of audiences and argued audiences select media contents according to their needs. The people who receive messages initially, disseminate messages to other people through interpersonal communication. The term 'audience' can be interpreted in two different ways. For the communication planners, audience means their target audiences. But a communication researcher tends to define audiences as the people who select and attend to media content voluntarily. Sometimes the communication planners plan certain messages based on some intentions, but the messages are not always received in accordance with the same planners' intention. Some researchers differentiate content gratification from process gratifications. When the outcome of the media messages are gratifying, they term it as 'content gratifications'. On the contrary, in the process of message consumption itself, 'gratifying' is termed as 'process gratification'. In process gratification, people consider the process of using media as more important than message content itself. People listen to radio in order to discuss certain issues, which is a good example of content gratification. This study will be looking at the different reasons behind people's listening.

According to the two-step flow communication model, some members of audiences are more active than others. These active members mostly disseminate messages to the less active members of the audiences. In third world countries, rural radio forums originated to create an atmosphere for discussion. Here the audiences discuss messages and may pass the contents to non-listeners. Traditionally, audiences have been considered passive receivers, but the more recent communication theories explain that

audiences are active members. The audience should also feel that the message is important to them and their neighbors. Apparently, the more relevant the problems are, the more involvement should be and the more the involvement, the more likely that the audiences will communicate more about the message. Communication is only complete when there is proper feedback in the process. Audiences need a certain 'communication competence' in order to participate in the feedback. According to Windhat, through participation, communication competence can be achieved. In this study, the circumstances under which the community radio listeners will participate in feedback will be explored.

McQuail (1997, P.22) argues that 'active audiences provide more feedback for media communicators, and the relationship between senders and receivers is more interactive'. This thesis will explore how tribal audiences are active listeners when they receive developmental messages such as agricultural information and share the information that they have with the neighbouring radio stations and friends. In other words they actively engage themselves with the information from radio and discuss the outcome of the message. On the other hand when they listen to film songs, the fieldwork reveals that they are more passive listeners in the sense that they also involve in other activities such as agriculture and embroidery.

Mody (1991) argues that horizontal communication comes first when we consider development at the grassroots level. The decentralised local media which have production centres at the regional level could enhance the 'bottom-up approach'(p.29). In mass communication, audiences are invisible and Mody stresses the importance of knowing your audiences by stating that 'communication is achieved, then, when the sender and the receiver hold meaning in common. Senders, she argues, do not have opportunity to personally interact with their audiences 'to fine tune a message so as to facilitate the sharing of meaning' (p.43). She says that the producers must listen to audiences on what their preferences are. She proposes the audience research model that 'begins with the audience and ends with the audience'(p.45). Secondly, Mody argues, in audience based development communication, it is important to make the audiences as sender and send

messages from the audiences where the receiver is also 'the audiences'. She explained this with an appropriate example with reference to visual media. However, I think the example is self explanatory in portraying the importance of audience research.

A close-up shot of a mosquito in a film on malaria is not recognised as a mosquito. Villagers announce that they don't have such big creatures in their area, so they have nothing to fear from malaria. Why? Because producers used the grammar of cinema that they were trained to use, not what the audience can understand (Mody, 1991, p.48).

When it comes to audience research, Mody narrates that ethnographic data, collected in the field was useful in determining broadcast timings and formats. Based on her community radio experience in Jamaica, Mody asks the following important questions: 'if identity of meaning between the source and receiver is what communication is, why not make receiver and the source the same entity? Why not make the receivers the source of their own messages?' (Mody, 1991, p.69). Bella Mody suggests two steps for effective media production. Firstly, the producers must deal with messages ranging from what the community knows about the subject to the unknown. Secondly it is important to know the overall view of community, for example the total atmosphere of the community, where and how audiences live as a community, to a particular subject which you want to communicate.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed radio and development research conducted in India and argued that the rural and remote audiences were largely ignored and the research technique adopted by the ARU was quantitative, which has a number of limitations in reflecting the grass roots realities. Secondly, it is clear, based on the literature reviewed here, that the research on remote tribal audiences in India is a neglected area, and this work aims to fill in the gap. Thirdly the nature and characteristics of radio audiences that are relevant to this research are reviewed.

Before I go on to discuss the ethnography of radio listening based on my fieldwork, it is important to look at the recent development related to community radio movement in India. Indian government is reluctant to permit independent community radio stations in India. Non governmental organizations' (NGOs) applications (who have potential to broadcast development and service programs) for community radio stations are being rejected by the MIB and are facing difficulties in getting licenses. On the other hand FM, commercial radio stations have been privatized in the cities and are very popular among city dwellers. Policies and regulatory obstacles of the MIB with regard to NGOs who seek licenses to run independent radio stations are not well developed in India. The following chapter provides a focussed background to this part of the community radio debate in India.

CHAPTER 3

COMMUNITY RADIO DEBATE IN INDIA

Introduction

India's population is now in excess of one billion, of whom 500 million are illiterate (about sixty four per cent for men, and thirty-nine per cent for women); more than 300 million live in poverty (Singh, 1999). There are thousands of newspapers and magazines, which are owned by private individuals and companies in India, but radio remained under the control of the central Government until 1997. Television was a state monopoly until the 1990s, but since the introduction of cable and satellite broadcasting, it has changed status. While television is an influential urban social medium in modern India, it is important to remember that the characteristics of radio, its portability, relative cheapness and ubiquity, also make it a major medium of communication, especially in rural India (Jayaprakash, 2000). The importance of radio is further enhanced by the presence of World Space, a Washington-based satellite radio broadcaster, and the Voice of America (VOA), which seek to become active in contributing to community radio in India, through the introduction of digital and satellite radio.

As far as rural communities are concerned, radio is considered by audiences to be an important medium in their everyday lives (Jayaprakash, 2000). Radio, with its diverse range of programs and proximity to the audience, can produce relevant programs at appropriate times. Given the technological challenges and opportunities facing radio in the early 21st Century, this chapter aims to examine the community radio debate in India.

The ways in which radio continues to serve its rural audiences needs to be examined by looking at the current policy in India, in regard to the

media in general, and radio specifically. Community radio and its current role in the Indian mediascape then needs to be considered, finally concluding with an evaluation of new technologies, especially Internet radio and its capacity to bring information and knowledge to rural communities. Then the ways in which the MIB dispenses licenses for radio broadcasting needs to be examined. However, before commencing my analysis I will first consider the Indian media environment from a general perspective.

Creating the Networks: Media Policy and Radio in India

Media policy in India has been driven mainly by political considerations. Despite the fact that Jawaharlal Nehru saw AIR fulfilling a largely democratic as well as developmental function, the various policies implemented by the various governments between 1947 and 1997 were aimed at maintaining political control over broadcasting. The result of this contradictory stance was to ensure that broadcasting became bureaucratized, self-serving and unable to meet the needs of its constituents, the listeners. This is especially true for rural audiences. The unsatisfactory situation, inherent in the politicization of broadcasting, led to widespread dissatisfaction in the community and debates about an autonomous broadcasting sphere among NGOs, journalists and academics (Noronha, 1999).

Although autonomy of the electronic media has been discussed in India since independence in 1947, it was granted to electronic media only in September 1997 with the introduction of the Prasar Bharati Bill. The fifty-year period 1947 – 1997 witnessed numerous discussions and debates on autonomy for the electronic media in India. These debates were of crucial importance to the creation of community radio because they helped form the conditions for change that eventually opened up the Indian mediascape in rural areas.

The Verghese Committee (MIB, 1978) set up by the Janatha Government in 1978 to review the functions of electronic media, recommended the creation of an autonomous body ('Akash Bharati') to run

the electronic media in India independent of political interference. The then Government of India refused to accept the recommendation, and broadcasting remained under the control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), therefore remaining susceptible to political interference. The Congress Government, which came to power in 1980, argued it was more concerned about the 'functional autonomy' of the media, than the creation of an autonomous corporation. Later, MIB on several occasions, argued that AIR and TV already enjoyed functional autonomy, and that the government had no intention of interfering in their day-to-day operations. Earlier in 1979, a considerably modified Prasar Bharati Bill providing autonomy to the electronic media was presented to the *Lok Sabha* (Lower House of the Indian Parliament). The new Congress Government led by Indira Gandhi who had had problems with the media during the 1975 'Emergency', continued its traditional policy of centralized control of the broadcast media. In short, the ruling government continued to use the electronic media as a propaganda medium to propagate its policies.

The Congress Government's attitude towards broadcasting had been enunciated clearly in 1948 by Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India, who said:

(...) my own view of the set-up for broadcasting is that we should approximate as far as possible to the British model, the BBC; that is to say, it would be better if we had a semi-autonomous corporation under the government, of course with the policy controlled by the government otherwise being not conducted as a government department but as a semi-autonomous corporation. Now, I do not think that is immediately feasible. I have merely mentioned this to the House. I think we should aim at that, even though we may have many difficulties. In fact, in most matters we should aim at the semi-autonomous corporation, the policy and other things being distantly controlled by the government, but the government or government departments not interfering in their day-to-day activities. But that is not an immediate issue (MIB, 1966).

Despite the liberal sentiments of his grandfather, Rajiv Ghandhi, who became Prime Minister after the assassination of his mother in 1985, continued the policy of his mother Indira Gandhi towards the electronic

media. He declared that India was not yet 'ready' for an independent radio and TV system. Rajiv Gandhi's position reflected his mother's thinking about the media which had been damaged by an event associated with the 'emergency' of 1975. By refusing to adopt a degree of autonomy for the media in 1980, Indira Gandhi alerted her opposition to the fact that strict political control of the media by the ruling Government worked against their interests. Subsequently, political parties later included media autonomy into their election campaigns and promised electorates that if they were elected, media autonomy would be implemented. On the 14th September 1997, the Prasar Bharati Bill was passed into law. The Minister for Information and Broadcasting, in the then United Front government, Mr. Jaipal Reddy ("Prasar Bharati Act Comes Into Force," 1997), said

... after September 14, [1997] there would be no Big Brother breathing down their neck, no telephone calls from private secretaries of the ministry telling them what to do or not to do. It would be their show and they would be free to run it the way they like.

The Minister then added, in an interview given to *'The Hindu'*, (1997), that he wanted 1997 to be remembered as a historic year for the electronic media in India. By freeing electronic media from Government control and regulating the presence of foreign satellite channels through the proposed Broadcasting Bill, India would become the only country in the third world to have a truly liberal broadcast regime with a state-funded, but autonomous statutory authority, the Prasar Bharati, overseeing its activities. At the same time a competing network of private channels, domestic as well as foreign, would operate within the country. The creation of Prasar Bharati was expected to establish All India Radio (AIR) and Doordashan as completely independent of the Government. Emphasizing this, the minister reiterated that the two would cease to be tools of propaganda for the Government, the ruling party or cliques within the ruling party. This would be achieved by making Prasar Bharati accountable only to parliament and not to the Government. The Government also presumed that the autonomous status of electronic media would help its personnel to work independently and with greater freedom.

The autonomy of the electronic media in India remains an ideal that is crucial to the development of community radio, because it is essential that staff be allowed to function outside of political constraints. The old system can be summed up by the anecdote of a retired station director who told the 'working group' that he joined Akashvani (radio) 'a fearless man, but retired a timid person'. This suggests a need to continue to question whether the situation has changed in regard to radio with the implementation of Prasar Bharati. The critical question here is whether electronic media staff can work independently, without interference from the Ministry or the local political cliques that have characterized Indian politics in recent years.

Prasar Bharati: True Autonomy?

In a short space of time a strong view has emerged that the Prasar Bharati Corporation (PBC) is not independent of government interference:

Prasar Bharati is still controlled by the government. Financial dependency is one reason. Prasar Bharati will keep what it earns: DD is expected to make Rs 425 crore while AIR will earn Rs 75 crore. But this Rs 500 crore isn't enough to keep it going. DD's projected expenses for 1997-98 are Rs 818 crore; AIR's is Rs 505 crore. Total expenses for Prasar Bharati: Rs 1,323 crore or an anticipated shortfall of Rs 823 crore. Where is the money going to come from? Obviously the Government will have to continue supporting the newly merged organisation with a grant-in-aid. But how autonomous can an organisation be if it has to depend on government funding? There can be no autonomy if it has to go to the ministry for funds (Bhaskar Ghose, quoted in Bhandare, 1997).

Underpinning this view is a number of assumptions about the organization of AIR, ranging from the manner in which it is financed, to its governance. The fact that the government of India remains the major source of income for the organization is problematic. The Prasar Bharati is now controlled by a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), whose structural relationship to the Minister mirrors the earlier model where a Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in conjunction with the Minister, controlled broadcasting. In short, little appears to have changed (Gill, 1999). Under the leadership of S.S.Gill, its first CEO, the organization attempted to establish its

autonomy. A committee comprising of twenty-two members of parliament from the different political parties monitored its operations, thereby creating the space for disagreement. Differences between the newly elected Bharatiya Janatha Party's (BJP), then Information and Broadcasting Minister and S.S. Gill quickly emerged, which led to Gill's sacking. As the press commented; 'now the real autonomy only exists on paper and not in actual fact' (Editorial, 1999).

PBC has not brought any constructive changes to regional radio broadcasting, as far as program content is concerned. Moreover, the local radio stations in India remain strictly controlled and monitored by the officials of the PBC. There is a need for an alternative broadcaster in the regions to allow rural communities to participate in the debates that are relevant to their lifestyles and everyday problems. Although local radio stations (LRS) were introduced in the 1980s, the concept of local radio in India largely failed because the program content was virtually identical to that of the national and regional radio stations. As basic relay stations, the local radio stations precluded local voices being heard in the community. This matter was compounded by the fact that FM radio in the urban centres became commercialized and therefore reliant on *filmm* music as their staple program content. In order to capitalize on the spaces made available, through the introduction of the Prasar Bharati and the move towards commercialization and competition, a community radio movement (CRM) emerged in India. While the contemporary community radio movement is a beneficiary of the changes, its significance lies in the fact that it is also likely to create policy changes for radio broadcasting in India, if successful.

The Community Radio Movement in India

Community radio (or local radio) is a relatively new concept in India that has particular importance for rural audiences. There are several forms of community radio. Incipient forms emerged early with a focus on rural audiences but these were largely top-down. The new policy changes allow for the development of bottom-up approaches. These rural forums were

thought to be very useful because poor village people, who could not afford to buy a radio set, were able to listen and discuss rural development programs. However, when cheap transistor sets became available in early 1970s the RRF lost favor because people wanted to listen to radio programs at home and, more importantly, group listening had changed to individual listening (Masani, 1976). The RRF, nevertheless, were the precursors of the community radio concept in India. They demonstrated the potential of radio for development, but more especially, the role of radio as a grass roots medium, one that can be used from the 'bottom up' rather than 'top down' in communicating ideas, concepts and information (Melkote, 1983, 1991).

Community radio stations have a variety of names in different parts of the world. According to the World Association for Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC), community radio has names like 'rural radio', 'co-operative radio', 'participatory radio', 'free radio', 'alternative', 'popular' and 'educational radio'. Worldwide, community radio stations also serve different audiences, according to their location. They are also owned by different organizations, like NGOs, student organizations, universities, municipalities, churches and trade unions. Community radio stations also tend to be funded differently, according to local conditions by not-for-profit groups and listeners themselves (AMARC, 2002).

Community radio is not about doing something for the community, but about the community doing something for itself, i.e., owning and controlling its own means of communication. It enhances communication amongst the local community and helps people to identify themselves with the community. According to the Tambuli community radio project in the Philippines, 'community radio means, it is a radio in the community, for the community, about the community and by the community'. According to 'Voices', a non-profit organization committed to the community radio movement in India, community radio has three functions. First, community radio involves local producers, with training in producing programs, which focus on local issues and concerns. The community also participates in the management of the station and schedules the content of the programs. Secondly, community radio is a non-profit enterprise. Thirdly, community radio, through its

programs, enhances and improves 'social conditions' and the quality of its 'cultural life'(AMARC, 2002).

The formation of both the PBC and the CRM have their origins in events that occurred in 1993. A dispute between the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting over the selling of broadcast rights to the Hero Cup cricket tournament (1993) to Trans World International (TWI) is considered the turning point in respect to all forms of broadcasting in India.

The Supreme Court of India, in a landmark judgement, determined that the airwaves are public property and that the Government's monopoly of broadcasting was unconstitutional. The court also recommended that the Government establish an independent broadcast authority that controlled all aspects of the electronic media in India (MIB, 2000). This also meant that a space had been created, whereby community radio, as distinct from local radio controlled by the PBC, could become a reality.

In the context of the community radio movement in India, it has been discussed here that while commercial interests have been getting licenses with relative ease, NGO's have been refused, and experience difficulty in gaining licenses to run community radio stations. While it is impossible to operate community radio stations legally, NGO's have been looking for opportunities to broadcast community based programs in the AIR stations and also trying to explore the possibility of using internet radio as an alternative. There are many NGO's (discussed below) who have the potential to provide program services that are independent of both the state and of commercial interests.

In 1996, those concerned with community radio broadcasting, representing AIR, universities, NGOs and journalists, met in Bangalore to discuss the importance of community radio and media policy in India. Identifying the centralized one-way broadcasting system and the non-existence of community radio broadcasting at the village level as a drawback to democracy, this meeting (Voices, 1996) proposed that a people/community owned, non-profit, independent community radio

broadcasting system could be created for the diverse audiences of India. Following this, in 1998, an NGO (Voices) produced and presented a rural community – oriented, monthly, 30 minute program, for broadcast on the local FM radio stations of AIR in Chitradurga, Karnataka in Southern India (Chitradurga, 1998). The program focused on various themes such as watershed management, the education of young women, women's health, adult literacy and so on. In a similar way, Kutch Mahila Vihas Sanghathan (KMVS), a NGO from Gujarat who trained mostly women in radio production, helped present 34 episodes on various subjects like women's rights, health and education and other local village problems on local radio stations in Gujarat (Mistry, 2000). The NGOs pioneered the development of community radio in rural India as distinct from the local radio stations of the PBC. Despite their successes and the fact that AIR has become more open to such initiatives, the regular scheduling of grass roots programs on the local AIR stations remains problematic. This makes the need for community radio even more pressing because the AIR network continues to function like a centralized one-way broadcasting system that precludes local voices from being heard.

By contrast, the commercial sector has begun to show an interest in the community radio concept, a development that is looked upon with suspicion by the NGOs who work closely with marginalised rural communities. They fear that the corporate sector would use this community-oriented medium for their own commercial interests and would not serve the purpose of community radio. This view is borne out by the commercialization of the FM sector, which has become privatized. The NGOs fear that all radio broadcasting in India would become a business-oriented system that would exclude the marginalised people and rural communities. It is unfortunate that while many NGOs (Voices, DDS, KMVS, to mention a few) have the infrastructure, studios, skills, and technologies to broadcast, they are unable to do so. This situation arises because of the Government's failure to devise selection criteria to give licenses to NGOs to run community radio stations.

The fear, on the Government's part seems to be that once permission is given NGOs to own community radio stations, after paying a small license

fee, there will be too many applicants. The Government argues that it is difficult to identify 'a genuine' NGO who will use this opportunity for the development of the marginalised communities. Obviously, the Government is not yet ready for this option and seeks to control the medium by making it artificially scarce to NGOs. By contrast the MIB sold 107 FM frequencies in 2000, enabling the private business establishments to run commercial radios in metropolitan centres and other big cities. At the same time, a number of applicants seeking permission to start rural based community radio stations are pending approval with the ministry. However, what the MIB appears to have failed to recognize is the fact that convergence, the conjoining of computing, telecommunications and media, has created the conditions whereby the management of a resource through artificial scarcity becomes redundant.

Technological Challenges and Opportunities

Throughout the 1990s India was subjected to an unparalleled communication technology transfer. Satellite broadcasting, cable television, mobile telephony, computing and computer-based community newspapers all became commonplace. The implications of this technological revolution have yet to be assessed, but it is clear that it has had profound effects on the expectations of the Indian consumer in all fields associated with communication in both urban and rural locations. These expectations are not confined to the middle classes alone, but have permeated all levels of Indian society. Radio is not excluded from the revolution that influences delivery, content, scheduling and consumption. Of particular note, the FM sector since its introduction has become urbanized and commercialized and is also a harbinger of the future.

FM listeners in India's big cities have become used to partnerships between Indian companies and international broadcasters. STAR TV (Murdoch owned based in Hong Kong) is now an established broadcaster in India (STAR, 2000). In addition, Voice of America (VOA) and BBC World Service in India, are actively seeking FM partners in order to break their

reliance on the short wave spectrum. The BBC remains the most popular foreign broadcaster in India, but World Space and VOA challenge its pre-eminence. In their attempts to enter the Indian market both World Space and VOA have identified suitable content which caters to the rural Indian audiences, as a particular problem. Consequently they are very particular in choosing commercial partners to broadcast through the Indian FM network. Again, in a perverse way, this can work in favor of community radio because its proponents bring fresh ideas to broadcasting and are not tied to the old bureaucratic mentalities that have governed so much of the program production in India.

The Washington based World Space seeks to introduce digital radio broadcasting to India, initially to cover the major cities with 'crystal clear', mainly music oriented programs. World Space has access to the Asiastar satellite whose footprint encompasses South Asia. The plan is to up-link programs to satellites and then have listeners downlink them on special receivers with satellite antennas. While there is a guarantee for superb quality music, the special radio receivers are expensive and will cost about Rs.8,000 to Rs. 16,000, which is going to be the main concern of World Space in order to be successful in a country like India. World Space plans to invest about \$US25 Million on digital radio in India. The company has links with major groups like Mid-day, RM Radio (Asianet), VRG Space Radio (Chennai) and All India Radio and it is also looking for tie-ups with other major media groups. The agreement offered by World Space includes a variety of channels providing diverse content. The trick will be to generate advertising revenue. The system, which combines both digital and analogue technologies, should reach areas where traditional and Internet services are limited or unavailable (Joseph, 2000). The problem is that such developments may have little bearing on community radio because of the expense. Nevertheless, in creating a climate of change for radio, the presence of World Space provides the Government with other problems that conceivably will benefit the wider introduction of community radio, through the provision of spare technological capacity.

VOA intends to tailor its programs much more closely to Indian concerns than World Space. Planned productions include features on South Asians living in the US and other topics such as technological developments, environmental issues, the Internet, movie-based programs and sports (STAR, 2000), all matters of interest in India. Of much greater significance, however, is the news function of VOA. Although private operators are allowed to broadcast on FM channels they must still operate within a paradigm of Government control. The Government does not permit them to broadcast independently produced news and current affairs programs (Mookerji, 2000, 2001). News and commentary remain the preserve of the Government, reinforcing the view that although the Prasar Bharati has failed, other providers using available technology ensure that Indians may get news from other sources such as BBC World Service and VOA.

Internet: Opportunities and challenges

The advent of the Internet on a large scale in urban India is also significant for radio, as it has the capacity to encourage local participation. The Internet, like other technologies, has permeated the fabric of Indian culture with Internet cafes now found even in the remotest areas. The potential for development has barely been recognized. The Internet not only encourages local participation, but it expands significantly the horizons of its users. The conjunction of the local and the global is embedded in this technology. Consequently, NGOs, educational institutions and universities are eagerly awaiting the day when they can start independent radio broadcasting through the Internet, thereby escaping the restrictions currently placed on community broadcasting (Mehta, 1999b).

Although literacy rate is low in India (52.5%), illiterate audiences can communicate verbally and produce their own cultural songs and programs. Internet radio can be used by the tribal communities, in which they can communicate effectively. Internet radio, as Mehtha (1999b, p.4) points out 'is nothing but audio files stored at a web site, which listeners can easily listen to by entering the appropriate URL into a web browser'. Internet browsing and

electronic mail facilities are available in the Ooty town and computer educated youth (with the help of officers from the NGOs) can explore the possibility of Internet radio.

At the moment AIR has a web site (<http://air.kode.net/>) which has stored radio programs on news, music, drama and spoken word programs. The music section has variety of programs such as film music, Indian pop, light music, classical music, folk music, devotional songs, and poetry. Film songs from different Indian languages (in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, Bengali and Marathi) are also stored in this web site. Similarly, drama, news and spoken word programs also have programs in various Indian languages. Tribal songs and programs are not listed in the official web site of AIR and tribal cultural programs. Internet radio can be a useful option for the hill audiences and thus tribal communities can have their own channel of communication.

One alternative to traditional broadcasting that foreshadows the Internet is 'narrowcasting' which is currently viewed as a temporary arrangement. Tape recorded messages and programs are produced and distributed to the communities where they are re-'broadcast' using available technologies. Even though narrowcasting requires a lot of effort in the distribution of tapes and organizing communities to come together, it has its limitations. Media activists have thus begun to explore new ways of using the Internet/cable technologies for radio broadcasting. Arun Mehta is such an activist. His main concern is how to make community radio work in a highly regulated environment that still contradicts the High Court's ruling that a monopoly of broadcasting is unconstitutional.

Talking about the opportunities of Internet radio Arun Mehta is cautious:

Internet radio is not a very good broadcast medium. If a thousand people start listening to the same station, the server packs up. Radio also somehow has to be wireless in your psyche. You can't be tethered to a computer (Mehta, 1999a).

Another major problem with the Internet is its limited access to rural communities in developing countries, like in India, where approximately only

one per cent of the total population have access to the technology. However, the importance of the Internet to community radio can never be underestimated. The Internet, with its unique quality of interactivity, can involve communities in participatory community radio broadcasting. One such example is the Kotmale Community Radio (KCR) project in Sri Lanka, where the Internet has been successfully used to gather information from the community. Listeners to the station ask questions of the project management through letters and phone calls to the station. The radio personnel use the Internet to find answers to the questions and then provide the answers over the radio. In this way, rural communities have access to information that is available on the Internet, through community radio. The listeners are also encouraged to visit KCR and browse the web on their own to get information. However, due to the non-availability of electricity and limited Internet access, web radio and Internet radio are yet to evolve fully amongst rural communities. Nevertheless, as Mehta has shown with his two alternatives ('dumb' and 'smart' models), the potential is there to make Internet radio a wide-reaching radio broadcast:

In the "dumb" approach, the output of the sound card on the computer can be fed to an amplifier, and distributed over ordinary copper wire to surrounding houses, each of which only needs a loudspeaker. In the "smart" model, audio signals could be distributed from the community PC using either twisted-pair telephone wires, or the Coaxial cable used by Cable TV operators. Installed in each house in the village that wished to receive radio broadcasts, would be a small Internet radio, consisting of a simple embedded microcomputer, a loudspeaker, a microphone and a couple of buttons for channel selection. While the dumb radio would only allow the listener to listen to a single broadcast set at the community center, the smart radio would allow choice, as well as the ability to interact (Mehta, 1999a)

Mehta (1999a) argues that although this kind of 'smart' device is not yet available, there is a possibility of being able to design such a device economically. This device may not receive signals from community radio managed by a local community, but it can be useful in receiving information from different Internet radios worldwide. Mehta calls this device, which is similar to cable TV, 'Cable Radio'. The production and distribution of

programs through this device clearly requires coordination and effort in order to make it a widely useable receiver. However, the important point here is that Mehta has identified the means whereby an effective means of accessing Internet becomes available to wider sections of rural communities.

Arun Mehta also suggests that it is possible to use cable networks linked to satellites to transmit radio signals without violating any laws since radio requires much less signal strength. Finally, Mehta observes, 'depending upon the quality of the (satellite TV) cable that is being used, it leaks power. The worse the quality of the cable, the more power it leaks. So radio is much easier to receive (from 'lossy' cables)' (Mehta, 1999a). Thus, it is clear that there are local technologies/transmitters/suitcase radios that are available at a low cost that may be used to establish community radio in India. Moreover, there are activists working to this end in creative ways. The major stumbling block is Government regulation, which is used to prevent community radio evolving in India, for what are essentially political reasons – a fear of losing control of the communication process, especially in rural India.

Conclusion

The main hindrance to community radio broadcasting remains the Government's Intransigence over ownership. The majority of the radio stations except the recently privatized FM radio stations, are owned and controlled by the PBC. While the commercial FM radio stations are privatized, development-oriented independent community radio stations are yet to evolve in India. While there is ample opportunity for the Internet to grow through community centres and Internet cafes with the independent community radio station being strictly regulated there is also a danger that the gap between the information rich and information poor within the country, will grow due to what amounts to a virtual monopoly of radio broadcasting by the state.

Having expanded and reached saturation point in AM/FM/SW broadcasting, Indian broadcasters are now looking for alternative media. I

argue that the two most important sites for expansion are community radio and Internet broadcasting. AIR is one of the largest networks in the world and it has nearly 200 radio stations. Geographically and population-wise the network reaches almost 100 per cent of the population of India and the only way to expand the network is to introduce community radio stations and Internet radio. The AIR officials and media personnel from I&B ministry agree that it is important to concentrate on the quality of software rather than the expansion of hardware in India. It does not mean that there is no spectrum available for the independent community broadcasters to own radio in India.

Despite a decrease in advertising revenue from radio broadcasting, radio remains a major medium in the Indian mediascape because it remains cheap to produce and even cheaper to receive. It may be that a loss of interest in the commercial sector, combined with technological innovation may be the salvation of community radio. However, the real change will have to occur at the official level. I argue that although autonomy is grudgingly given, fissures have emerged in the Indian fabric of control and that there are bodies waiting to enter the field. So long as the NGOs and broadcast activists remain, there is hope for community broadcasting in India.

Before I discuss on the dynamics of radio listening among tribal audiences based on my fieldwork it is essential to reflect upon the methodological issues. In the next chapter I will discuss the method adopted and how qualitative data was gathered which form the main core for the analysis.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY: QUALITATIVE AUDIENCE ETHNOGRAPHY

Remember the golden rule of ethnography: Treat everyone as a potential consultant. This rule may be difficult to follow at times, but it generally pays off in the long run (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987, p.255).

Introduction

The methodology adopted for this study 'qualitative audience ethnography' was drawn from the readings of standard works on audience research and ethnography. In this chapter I analyze the various dynamics of audiences and combine some of the insights gained with standard ethnographic practice. A methodology is developed that is self reflexive, pays strict attention to the interface between qualitative and quantitative research and draws close attention to the setting in which the research is conducted.

Ethnographic audience research methods have been widely used in media and cultural studies (Alasuutari, 1996, 1999; Ang, 1985a, 1985b, 1996; Ang & Hermes, 1996; Buckingham, 1987; Dickinson, 1998.; Gray, 1987, 1992, 1999; Hobson, 1980, 1982; Lull, 1990, 1991; Morley, 1986, 1992; Morley & Silverstone, 1990, 1991; Tacchi, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Tulloch & Moran, 1986). Buckingham's work on the most popular program on British television '*Eastenders*' looked at how audiences, including children, interpreted this program, providing some useful readings in regard to gender and audience analysis. Tulloch and Moran's (1986) research on '*A Country Practice*' presented an ethnographic account of program production and looked at how parents permitted their children to watch this program.

They visited nine households, interviewed the family members and they studied how and why families watch this program. This work was enlightening for the perspectives and importance of program production, as well as reception analysis. Hobson's (1982) audience research on the popular soap opera drama 'Crossroads', was essentially based on the method of watching the program with the audiences and observing and recording their responses to the program. Similarly, Ang (1985a), while researching watching *Dallas* investigated audience likes and dislikes in regard to the program. Silverstone (1993) emphasized the importance of studying different patterns of television viewing in different households. Lull (1990) looked at the dynamics of program selection and viewing habits of television audiences at home. Morley (1992) interviewed eighteen families in South London in order to study television viewing, and argued that men and women offered contrasting perspectives on viewing style and program choices.

The historical development of audience studies and its classifications are amply discussed in the latest work of Alasuutari (1999). He classified audience research as first, second and third generation audience studies. The first generation of audience studies follows Hall's (1980) encoding/decoding model where different audiences decode similar messages differently. Several studies followed the seminal work of Morley (1980). The qualitative audience reception studies (Ang, 1985b; Hobson, 1982) which analysed a specific program and its reception by interviewing audiences, forms the second-generation of audience studies. In the second-generation studies there was a shift from reception studies towards audience ethnography. Among other things, audience ethnographic studies analyse the gender of the viewer in viewing programs. There was also a shift from the program content to the function of the medium; for instance David Morley's *Family Television* (1986) is a good example. Studies of this kind relate to the everyday life of a group, to a program, or a medium (eg. Gray, 1992). Alasuutari (1999) argues that the study of the place of the media in everyday life is an 'emerging trend' in audience studies, thereby avoiding the

problem of studying the media outside of the context or through content analysis.

Reviewing audience research studies, Alasuutari (1999) argues that these studies failed to look at media use in the context of everyday life. He also argues that analysis also lay outside the media, and it was also important to look at the cultural concerns that surround media use and messages. Following Alasuutari's third generation audience studies, as a theoretical foundation, my fieldwork was conducted amongst audiences in the remote Nilgiris in South India. By following qualitative audience ethnography as a methodology, my research analyses how audiences of tribal communities listen to radio in their everyday lives, in the context of the changing mediascape in Southern India.

There is some disagreement and criticism about the ways in which 'ethnography' has been used in audience reception studies (Nightingale, 1989). Nightingale (1989) and McEachern (1998) criticized the work on *Crossroad, Dallas, A Country Practice* and *Eastender*, as these works narrowly adopted the usual strategies of ethnography. Nightingale (1989, pp.54-55) argued that 'not only do they not set out to provide an account of an 'other' culture, but in many of them the only contact with the other culture is an interview or the reading of a letter'. She added that these works failed to describe the place where interviews were conducted and the respondents' reactions during those interviews. Consequently, I have adopted the basic ethnographic methods and focused more on 'ethnography of radio listening', with the help of an extensive series of interviews, participant observation, field notes and photographs (Patton, 1990; Webb, 1996) of tribal people in Tamil Nadu in 1998 and 1999. In addition, I have carefully augmented the ethnographic methodology with other qualitative research methods such as Grounded Theory (Alasuutari, 1996; Eapen, 2000.; Gupta, 1984.; Jankowski, 1991; Lindlof, 1991; Lunt & Livingstone, 1996; McEachern, 1998; Moores, 1993; Morgan, 1993; Nightingale, 1989; Patton, 1990; Ross, 2001; Sanjak, 1990; Sinha, 1989; Spitulnik, 1993; Tacchi, 2000a; Vasudeva & Chakravarty, 1989; Werner & Schoepfle, 1987). Moreover, in recent times, qualitative methodology has been proposed for the study of community media and

audiences in India, so as to include both everyday life and media use (Agrawal, 1981; Eapen, 2000.; Gupta, 1984.; Sinha, 1989; Vasudeva & Chakravarty, 1989). Sinha (1989, pp.435-437) argued that 'various methodologies have been used in communication research but most of them remain very close to the survey method'. The dominance of quantitative methodology has acted to severely limit the kinds of question asked and the types of problem studied'.

The combination of these methodological tools has allowed me to construct a more nuance account of audience and reception theory. Moreover, there has been little or no similar work conducted into these audiences. It is the combination of methodological rigor and audience category that I describe below, arguing that the significance of my research arises from the 'fieldwork'. Patton (1990, p.46) argued that 'fieldwork is the central activity of qualitative inquiry. Going into the field means having direct and personal contact with people under study in their own environments'.

Background

Before commencing the analysis of my methodological tools and justifying my choice of them, I wish to outline the reasons why I have chosen this particular topic for research. The first ever-local radio station in India, Nagercoil, has been a focus for my study since 1992. When conducting this research, I followed quantitative research methods. The findings of this research project revealed that radio has enormous potential in reaching rural audiences. Recent changes in the rural mediascape encouraged me to continue this focus on radio and choose a topic that is highly relevant and important to the remote rural indigenous communities in South India. As part of this research, I have also discussed my interest with audience research officers and program executives of All India Radio (AIR) before finalizing my topic in this field.

Ooty radio station was established in the Nilgiri hill region in 1993 and is located near the Tribal settlements of the Nilgiris. Tribal communities recently gained access to satellite and cable television. My literature search in the local libraries of Tamil Nadu, the libraries of AIR stations and

international databases highlighted that audience research has never been conducted amongst the tribal audiences of South India. I initially thought of conducting my research amongst the mainstream population living in the Nilgiris. However, since there is no research based on the media and the tribal communities of the Nilgiris, I decided to undertake this current study. I was born and brought up in Tamil Nadu and lived my first twenty-seven years in this state. I speak and understand Tamil, which is commonly used by the tribal communities in the areas selected for this research. This was one of the major reasons, amongst others, for choosing the locale for this research. Addressing this issue George(1986, p.172) argues that:

The fact is that situating of most anthropological ethnography- why this group rather than another, why this locale rather than another- has not been acknowledged as a major problem, or at least as an issue that relates to any broader aim of research. Instead it has often been dictated by opportunity. Not so with an ethnography sensitive to political economy, which must answer the question, "why precisely are you in this locale rather than another?"

During my M.Phil (Master of Philosophy) Program in India, I assisted anthropologists involved in the Anthropological Survey of India who came to South India to study tribal communities of different origins and locale selected for this research. I located tribal communities and initiated rapport with people from different age groups and gender for this project. This experience also gave me the confidence to undertake research. Based on this experience, I realized that I could interact with people successfully and gather information pertinent to their lifestyle, culture and tradition. This interaction with tribal communities also gave me the confidence to communicate the aims of my research effectively.

In order to better appreciate the problems facing my approach to this research, one needs to understand the physical locations of the respective groups investigated. The Todas live at the highest altitude in the hills of Nilgiris and their settlements are scattered over large tracts of land and are often located in the remotest regions. There are only three to five houses in each settlement, most of these settlements do not have electric power supply. Hence, cable television operators cannot reach the Toda

settlements. They do not think it is viable to extend their business to these areas. On the other hand, the Kotas live as communities in a comparatively lower altitude than the Toda, thereby having better access to modern media like cable and satellite television. There can be more than fifty houses in Kota settlements with power supplies and access to cable television.

Figure: 2



A Kota village in the Nilgiris

Badagas live at the lowest altitude of the three groups and are financially well advanced in comparison to the Todas and the Kotas because they are agriculturalists, cultivating tea, amongst other crops. They have greater access to education and other aspects of modern society like better housing, power supply, transportation and television.

The term 'audience' simply refers to 'the readers of, viewers of, or listeners to one or other media channel...' (McQuail, 1997, p.1). In this thesis, the term 'audiences' mainly refers to radio listeners. The terms 'audiences' and 'listeners' are interchangeable for the purposes of this study. However, it has to be borne in mind that the term also refers to people who have been exposed to the different forms of mass media like newspapers, television and other forms of traditional media like street theatre and puppet shows.

Approaching the People: Methodological Reflections

The main aim of ethnography is to study people in their 'natural settings'. Ethnographers therefore avoid collecting data through experimental methods and formal interviews. Before I began the interviews, I established a rapport with the interviewees by introducing the research topic and myself to them. Initially I approached anyone who was available to talk. I then checked whether they belonged to the tribal communities of the Toda or the Kota, because nowadays non-tribal people (like the Tamils and the Kannadigas) interact with tribal people and are found in tribal settlements. Tribal students have contact with non-tribal students and non-tribal people work along with the tribal people in the fields. Another common trend is that tribal children and adults visit their relatives and friends in other settlements and literally feel that they are in their own settlements.

On certain occasions, especially during the early stages of data collection, I was bold enough to contact strangers in the street to ask for their help for more information about the people and the village. Generally they do not reveal to the researchers that they are from a different settlement unless asked. Another related problem I encountered in conversations with the people in the streets, was that they tended to talk about a different village but frequently said 'in our village' which might give an entirely different picture. Once the contact had been made and cultivated with the people, fieldwork began, which led to further contacts. People were interviewed in their homes, open areas and even in the streets, wherever they were free and felt at ease to co-operate with the interviewer.

I contacted people of all age groups. For example, I spoke to Vannila, a ten-year-old Toda girl from 'Kuruthukkuli' Toda settlement who is studying fifth standard (Primary five). She was playing with her friends in her settlement and I approached them, initiated conversation and brought up my discussion in a conversational style rather than an interviewing style. I started my conversation with the question, 'What is your name?' followed by 'do you have a radio at home?' While this approach may appear simplistic, I found I could talk to children at this level and collect information at the same

time. Here it is important to mention the gender issue. I largely chose boys and men as my initial contacts, because tribal women do not freely converse with men whom they do not personally know. However, the male contacts were very helpful in this respect as they introduced me to females from all age groups for the purposes of my study. To elaborate on this, sometimes sons introduced me to their mothers, husbands to their wives and boys to their sisters. Werner & Schoepfle (1987, pp.183-184) describes this process as:

After choosing anyone who co-operates, the next step is to follow a network. At first, one interviews those people who are easily accessible. Then, ethnographers use the help of this first batch of people to introduce them to a widening circle of friends and relations. The "networking" label drives from the fact that ethnographers utilise the personal social networks of their earliest contacts to expand the sample.

Moreover, once contact was established, I revealed to them that I am married and have a one-year-old daughter, which further helped me in my interviews with the younger tribal women. The interviews lasted between half-an-hour and one hour duration. On certain occasions I had to visit some villages again and again to meet my one or two key informants in that village who were away during my previous visits.

I describe in detail my methodology for two reasons. First, the method that I adopted slightly deviates from the standard ethnographic practice in audience studies and allowed me to acknowledge my own presence in the process of data collection and research. Second, the methodology allowed reflection of my own position as an Indian scholar being trained in a Western academic tradition. I come from Tamil Nadu and used Tamil as my language (which is also widely spoken by the tribal community) to interview people. I stayed in Ooty for seventy days. I also opted to stay in Toda settlements for a few days to observe the people's lifestyle. Getting access to the Todas was not difficult because I met some influential Toda leaders who were very happy to take me to various villages and introduce me to the people. During my stay in the villages, I participated in family functions, ceremonies and ate their food. During my fieldwork I participated in the Tribal peoples functions

and this helped me to create a very good rapport with the whole village community. For example, when the Kotas at Kollimalai village celebrated Gandhi Jayanthi (October 2nd, to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday), I reached their village early in the morning and joined with them when they performed their tribal dance. I did not record any observations during this visit to this village, however my participation in their traditional dance and musical chair competition helped me to get, not only an introduction, but also accepted as a friend so that I could get complete co-operation until I completed my data collection. Before I recorded the interviews using my small tape recorder, I asked their permission to do so. During the interviews I also noted down the interviewee's facial reaction and other information that the tape recorder could not record (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987). I also established through my own facial expression that I was interested in what the informant was saying and encouraged them to talk. Although I used a tape recorder, I listened to the informant's responses very carefully and once I clearly understood the reply, I asked the next question leading from their response:

Don't be looking at your notes or preparing your next question when the informant is talking ; listen to what the informant is saying. "Follow through" from his or her responses, i.e., make up your next question after you have understood his or her previous response (Gladwin, 1989, p.25).

On certain occasions it was not feasible to record the interviews. During my fieldwork, when I wanted to interview AIR's program officers, I did not use my tape recorders, solely relying on my note taking abilities. This was because they were Government employees and under certain restrictions, as the recording of their views and opinions is not encouraged. Apart from interviewing, I followed the participant observation technique to observe tribal communities lifestyle. When I contacted the people, I asked them whether I could visit their houses to see where the radio sets were placed and how they generally listened to the radio. They were very happy to take me to their homes and allowed me to take photographs, sometimes even in the kitchen. Patton (1990, p.207) argues that 'in participant observation the researcher shares as intimately as possible in the life and

activities of the setting under study. The purpose of such participation is to develop an insider's view of what is happening'. Patton emphasized that a combination of observing and informal interviewing in the field is crucial for participant observation.

Ethnographic Interview

Data was collected through participant observation, unstructured interviews, field notes and photographs. Once fieldwork commenced, the main question in my mind was how the tribal audiences use radio in the context of changing mediascape in South India. Apart from having the major research questions that I have mentioned above, I did not have any other subsidiary questions in mind in line with ethnographic principles (Spradely, 1980). I adhered to the precept that all ethnographers begin with broad questions. After the interviews were completed, I coded the data, identified the main concepts and themes and arrived at further questions. I was then able to narrow down my focus towards these emerging questions. Living with the tribal communities helped me to see how the tribal audiences used radio in their everyday lives. Audiences also shared their listening experiences with me and expressed their views about the low powered Ooty radio station located near their settlements. Fieldwork was conducted in twenty Toda and all six Kota settlements of Nilgiris. A total of 227 people from Toda, Kota and Kannikaran communities have been interviewed. The following tables provide the relevant data.

Table 3: Informants Profile:

Communities	Male	Female	Total
Toda	48	43	91
Kota	42	43	85
Kannikaran	26	25	51
Total	116	111	227

Table 4: Informants: Age wise

Age Group	Toda	Kota	Kannikaran	Total
0-12	25	10	02	37
13-19	13	14	06	33
20-35	23	48	23	94
36-50	24	09	17	50
50 and Above	06	04	03	13
Total	91	85	51	227

The data was collected from August 1998 to January 1999 before a follow up field visit was made from July 1999 to August 1999. The data was collected using in-depth interviews, participant observation (Jankowski, 1991; Spitulnik, 1993; Spradely, 1980) field notes (Sanjak, 1990), focus groups (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996; Morgan, 1993; Patton, 1990), and from secondary documents. Patton (1990, p.187) argues that 'one important way to strengthen a study is through triangulation, or the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomena or programs':

No single method ever adequately solves the problem of rival causal factors...Because each method reveals different aspects of empirical reality, multiple methods of observation must be employed. This is termed triangulation. I now offer as a final methodological rule the principle that multiple methods should be used in every investigation (Patton, 1990, p.187).

Some of the extracts from the transcription of my ethnographic interviews follow here. They provide insights into the manner in which I spoke to informants, how they responded to my questions and the issues that interested them. An excellent example is Subramanian, a 15 year-old Kota boy, from Sholurur Kokkal, studying at high school, said,:

My father and mother largely listen and use radio. Since my parents do agriculture, everyday my parents listen to these programs. On QRS I listen to "Malai aruvi". I listen and give importance to this program because the villages that are

located near our village speak different languages. Listening to these programs would help me to learn their language and communicate with them. I listen to radio in the morning and comparatively less in the evening. My parents also listen to radio in the early morning. We definitely need radio, as we do not have a tape recorder or electricity at home. So we largely listen to radio. We don't have any other media for entertainment. So radio is important to us. I use radio for songs and news. On Monday I tune Coimbatore at 8 pm to listen to drama. I largely tune Colombo radio station to listen to film songs. I don't use television in my neighbor's house because sometimes they would have guests and it will be a disturbance to them. So, I don't go there often but occasionally when they show films on television I go to their house. Since we have radio at home, I use radio more than television. When I want to listen to radio news, my parents change some other stations where they broadcast songs. So we don't listen to radio news. I get more from Raj and Sun TV [regional satellite and cable channels] news. We don't get DD [National Television Broadcaster, Doordarshan] clearly in our village; we don't use it much. There are some constraints in watching television in the neighbor's house. I don't want to disturb them. My parents also say not to disturb them. I largely listen to radio in the morning until 8 am. My parents listen in the evening to songs and drama. I don't read newspaper often.

Through interviews, I examined tribal audience's exposure to different types of mass media such as newspapers, radio and television in order to avoid collecting data biased only towards radio thus helping to create a broader picture of the tribal incorporation into the modern Indian mediascape.

Another informant was Balaraman, an agriculturalist, a 36-year-old Kota man from Tiruchikadl, educated up to 6th standard (Form one), who pointed out that there are eighty houses in his village, and while only fifteen houses have television sets, they all with cable connection. The Kotas in this village largely practice agriculture. There are also people working in the government sector. They speak their own dialect, Kota. Balaraman did not have a television but did possess a radio set. He generally woke up at 6 am and listened to news at 6.30. Later his wife listened to songs. Like everyone else, Balaraman listened to the radio until 9.30 in the morning. The most popular radio stations they listened to were Coimbatore and Sri Lanka. According to Balaraman the villagers did not listen to agricultural programs, however, they tune into ORS, Tuticorin and Singapore radio to listen to film

songs. Based on the emerging themes and concepts, I included more new queries in subsequent interviews. For example, in the above-mentioned interview, Balaraman said that he listened to overseas radio, so I included this new emerging concept in to my questions for the subsequent interviews in order to explore emerging themes.

Maathi, aged 40, a Kota woman from Kollimalai, educated up to 5th std (primary five) disclosed she kept her radio set in the kitchen in order to listen to songs, stories and many other programs while conducting her normal domestic routine.

Figure: 3



A Kota woman listening to radio in the kitchen

It is very convenient, if I keep it in some other room instead of the living room because it may disturb our children. So I keep it near the "aduppu" [the fire stove]. I keep the volume very low and listen to radio when the children are studying. 'During their rest time, they sit in the kitchen and listen to radio. When the children are studying they don't watch television. If we keep it in a separate room it will be "safety" [safer] [good for the children's education]. If we keep the television in the living room, anytime the children would switch on the television and watch all the programs. So we keep it in a separate room. Whenever, they have free time we watch television. On television we can only watch the 8.30 pm Tamil news. On radio, we listen to 6.45 am news and 7.15 am news. Since we are working in the daytime we cannot listen to radio. When we come home at one in the afternoon we listen to radio for an hour. I have presented a radio program last year and in total

three times. Twice I had to go to the radio station for the recording and once they visited us and recorded the program here in our village. My husband works as a post-man and so they interviewed both of us. Then with a "music set" [music troops with instruments] we went to Ooty Radio Station [ORS studios] and gave a program of Kota songs. Everyone in our village listened to that program and said that the songs were good and we hope to give more programs in the future. ORS helps us to pass our time by listening to stories, songs ['Giramiya Kalai'], news and so on. When we work, we cannot watch television. Radio is most important for women when they work in the kitchen. We cannot sit, take rest and watch television. Therefore, we mostly listen to radio and watch television only when we get some free time.

This quote demonstrates the importance of radio in everyday life for the Kota audiences and explained how audiences are involved in their own cultural production with the help of ORS.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The transcribed data was then coded and classified based on 'resemblance' or 'likeness' (see, Alasuutari, 1996; Fetterman, D, 1989.; Lebar, 1970; Lindlof, 1991; McEachern, 1998; Nightingale, 1989). Through this process some important categories were identified and compared for similarities and differences. Connections between these categories were made before the data was grouped together. Qualitative data analysis software, Nudist 4, was used to search and manage the data. The interviews were recorded in 27, 90 -minute audio-tapes, nine each for the Toda, Kota, and Kannikaran audiences used.

Following standard ethnographic practice I began to formulate and ask subsidiary questions in the subsequent interviews. These questions were helpful to explore the issues of radio listening among people in these remote communities. For example, the tribal audiences' exposure to overseas radio such as Singapore and Malaysia were included in the subsequent interviews and the issue was further explored and included as an important factor for my discussion of commercial broadcasting. The transcribed data was mainly coded as various radio programs (such as agriculture, news, film songs,

malai aruvi, yengal giramam, news), gender, age (children, teenagers, elderly etc), time of radio-listening (morning, evening, night) to explore the issues and answer the research questions. Field photographs mostly taken by the researcher (except where the researcher appears in the photograph) with the permission of the people and were used accordingly to give more insight to the topic. Some of the significant subsidiary questions that emerged from my data include:

1. Why do audiences participate in radio programs? In what way does audience participation enhance the impact of programs among rural audiences?
2. How far can the programs enhance the lives of tribal audiences? Are the people happy with the way ORS broadcasts and the way in which it deals with the problems of everyday life?
3. How do tribal audiences use commercial broadcasting? Are they carried away by the film-based entertainment programs as many of the regional private satellite television often include in their broadcast?
4. Are the public service programs appealing to the tribal audiences?
5. Does AIR broadcast programs at an appropriate time to rural folks?
6. Has the arrival of satellite and cable television in tribal settlements affected radio listening among tribal audiences of this region?

This description of my ethnographic method and analysis explains how and why I selected this area of research and also the importance of this research in the context of the rapidly changing mediascape in India. I also discussed how I accessed the tribal settlements, attracted audiences for my research project, collected and analyzed my data.

Conclusion

This research argues that the recent exposure of audiences to satellite and cable television has altered the way remote tribal communities use radio for development. This necessitates some important changes in programming and scheduling of development and other programs. In order to get an

objective analysis of radio usage I had informed my informants that my main focus is to study about radio and issues surrounding 'mass media' use. I was able to elicit information on radio use in the context of their everyday lives. Lull (1990) studied how families in the US chose television programs. While collecting data, it was not revealed to the subject family members that the main focus of Lull's study was television. Conversely, the subjects were told the researchers were interested in observing family life. Families were at first given only a general introduction to the purpose of the research. They were told that the observers were students studying communication who were interested in 'family life'. It was not possible to reveal the researchers' particular interests since this knowledge would probably have influenced the subject families' media activities during the observational periods (Lull, 1990, p.34). This approach also helped me to gather information on how audiences in these regions use mass media generally, and radio in particular. The next chapter will discuss and analyze how gender influence radio listening in the context of social, cultural and developmental dynamics of remote tribal audiences.

CHAPTER 5

RADIO AND GENDER

Radio may lack the glamour of film or television, but it is undoubtedly an essential part of everyday life for millions of people (Nye, Godwin, & Hollows, 2000, p.73).

Introduction

Research on gendered program preferences and media use has been developed in the field of media and cultural studies since the early 1980s (Ang, 1985b; Ang & Hermes, 1996; Baehr, 1987; Brundson, 1997; Gray, 1992; Hobson, 1980, 1982; Livingstone, 1994; Mitchell, 2000; Moores, 1993; Morley, 1986; Morley & Silverstone, 1990; Radway, 1987; Rao, 1987; Tacchi, 1997, 2000a). Hobson's research (Hobson, 1980, p.109) in the U.K, analyzed the appeal of television and daytime radio in the lives of housewives. Hobson observed that daytime radio helped housewives to manage the loneliness caused by isolation in the domestic sphere. Hobson also argued that the television viewing in the domestic context is differentiated by gender. Women, in her study, designated news, current affairs, documentary and war films as masculine genres, which they largely avoided. Instead, they preferred genres such as quiz shows, movies and most importantly, soap operas. In a subsequent study of *Crossroads*, the British television soap opera, Hobson (1982, pp.104-135) argued that gender differentiated readings of the text and their context of consumption was to be understood as part of the everyday life of the audiences, because television viewing was not a separate activity, and because it was woven into the routine of domestic responsibilities. Morley and Silverstone (1990, p.46) argued that 'the meanings which are generated in the confrontation between television and audience are not confined to the viewing situation, but are

generated and sustained through the activities of daily life'. I would suggest that similar arguments might be constructed in respect to radio in the South Asian context.

The work of Lull (1990) and Morley (1986) focuses on television viewing in the context of the domestic sphere and everyday life. I believe their respective insights have relevance to my own analysis of the tribal audiences' use of radio. Morley has discussed in depth the role the media plays in everyday life. Morley's work, conducted in South London, identified gendered viewing practices and argued that men consider the domestic sphere as a site of leisure, since they spend 'work time' outside the home. It was the contrary for women, because women fulfil the majority of household duties, which can be described as resulting in a distracted consumption (Morley, 1986). Similarly, domesticity can be described as defining much of tribal women's reality. Radio listening is closely associated with this reality in the minds of the women interviewed for this research.

In the United States, feminist academics like Tania Modleski (see, Modleski, 1984) and Janice Radway (see, Radway, 1987) have examined how women watch daytime television and consume romantic fiction respectively, in the context of family relations and domestic obligations. Modleski (1984) argues that 'the script writers, anticipating the housewife's distracted state, are careful to repeat important elements of the story several times'. Again the insights provided here are relevant to my analysis of the gendered nature of radio listening among tribal communities in South India. The radio dramas that constitute the staple fare of women's, listening follow a formula very similar to that itemized by Modleski, suggesting that Indian radio script writers are aware of the domestically distracted state of female listeners and compose their narratives accordingly. My aim here, in reviewing the work on audience analysis, is to follow the suggestion of Moores (1990, p.25), who argued that 'future work must continue to look at the ways in which particular genres appeal to particular audiences', which is the precise aim of this chapter.

This chapter also looks at the differential uses of radio, in the masculine and feminine spheres beyond households among tribal

communities in either the domestic or public sphere. To better understand the complexity of the gendered uses of radio in the everyday lives of the tribal audiences, an attempt has been made to characterize the involvement of tribal audiences towards radio, as an indigenous cultural production. I will argue in this chapter, that radio provides tribal audiences with many opportunities to participate in the radio programs of their neighboring low power radio stations and to reflect upon their culture in their everyday lives. Since remote radio audiences have limited opportunities to watch television, it is also important to look at the consumption of radio in the context of television viewing.

Hobson (1980), who based her ethnographic work on women with young children, has argued that 'there is a separation between the consumption of radio and television, but both provide crucial elements in the experience and management of their lives'(Hobson, 1980, p.105). Her work mainly explored how women watched television in their everyday lives, as well as their use and reading of television soaps.

Media and Gender

After Hall's encoding/ decoding model (Hall, 1980), audience research, or reception research in media studies, shifted from a 'behaviouristic stimulus-response model to an interpretive framework' (Alasuutari, 1999). David Morley's *The Nationwide Audience* (Morley, 1980), was the first work to follow Hall's model, followed by the analysis of romantic serials with an emphasis on gender and reception (Ang, 1985b; Hobson, 1982). Subsequently, many studies based on television audiences and their gendered program preferences followed (Ang, 1996; Baehr, 1987; Brundsdon, 1997; Buckingham, 1987; Gray, 1987, 1992; Lull, 1990; Mankekar, 1999; Monteiro, 1998; Morley, 1986, 1992; Tulloch & Moran, 1986).

Women and Radio (Mitchell, 2000) is a major work that recently explored gender and radio. Karpf (2000), argues that 'the field of women and radio is in its infancy'. Moores' (2000) work on early radio in the 1920s and

1930s explores the place of radio in households. He identifies three important changes that occurred in terms of radio broadcasting: Firstly, the mechanical operation and aesthetic style of the radio set changed dramatically, turning it into a source of shared entertainment and a fashionable piece of living room furniture. Secondly, there was the introduction of broadcast discourses, which addressed the 'family audience' while specifically seeking to 'interpellate' mothers as the feminine monitors of domestic life. Finally, broadcasters began to order their program output into fixed schedules that revolved around the rhythm of daily routines and especially the imagined activities of the housewife.

Gray (1987; 1992), mainly focussed on 'the domestic video cassette recorder (VCR) and in particular how women use and what they think about, this piece of entertainment technology' (Gray, 1992, p.1). In her concluding remarks Gray pointed out that 'some of the women claimed to be generally resistant to technology, dismissing the VCR as yet another gadget in the household. Some were simply not interested in television and, therefore, in video'(Gray, 1992, p.247). Gray further argued that 'their [women's] male partners and children would seem to have a much more direct and less conditional relationship with the machine'(p.248). Morley's (1986) work on *Family Television* studied the gendered use of technology and the use of the Video machine. He argued that:

None of the women operate the video recorder themselves to any great extent, relying on husband or children to work it for them. This is simply an effect of their cultural formation as "ignorant" and "disinterested" in relation to machinery in general, and is therefore an obvious point (...) (Morley, 1986, p.158).

Similarly, the tribal women told me that their sons and husbands very often operate the radio, mainly because they consider the radio set as a part of the masculine domain.

Gender Studies in the Indian Context

Gender has become a significant issue for Indian cultural life (Agarwal, 1997; Anagol, 1998; Bannerji, 1998; Ray, 2000; Sen, 1997; Shiva, 1997). However, feminism's purchase is largely urban, functioning principally in the major cities such as Mumbai, New Delhi, Calcutta and Chennai (Sen, 1997). Sen (1997, p.145), argues that 'women agricultural laborers, construction workers or petty traders experience a degree of sexual control over their mobility that affects their entry into the market for wage labor and income earning'. However, they live outside of the feminist gaze, as they are concerned with securing a living in difficult circumstances. The principal concerns of the feminists are with patriarchy (Ray, 2000; Sangari & Sudesh, 1990; Shiva, 1997) and the manner in which the classic Indian texts have been used by men to construct an ideology that subordinates women (Ray, 2000).

The alleged return of 'sati' (Roop Kanwar, September, 4 1987) and the large number of dowry deaths, attest to the subordinate status of women within Indian mainstream society (Dube, 1990a, 1990b; Nandy, 1994). Dube (1990a) argues that women's sexuality, movements and social contacts, have restraints and are controlled by men. Female infanticide, the 'exploitation of female child labor' and child marriages are still being reported in the media in spite of legislation against these social evils. Dube observes that, though there are increasing opportunities for women in education, 'enrolment figures for girls are lower than those for boys and the dropout rates are alarmingly high' (Dube, 1990a, p.103). However, some significant gains have been made in respect to the status of women in India but unfortunately these do not seem to have filtered through to the remote regions under investigation in this thesis.

In respect to the media of film and television, soaps have attracted the bulk of the research attention (Mankekar, 1999; Monteiro, 1998). There has been no research done on the gendered nature of radio use in the remote audiences of India. Thus, this thesis intends to show that gender is a major factor in determining how radio is used in remote Indian homes, amongst

tribal people, in program selection and even the interpretation of information. While the data collected reinforces the widely held social convictions about gender – that men dominate social practices – it also reveals that women are not entirely disempowered and that indeed they are significant players in domestic radio use. This may be a significant departure from traditional gender roles.

Gender and the Tribal Audience

Walker (1986; 1989) argues that although there are no restrictions on the use of the secular buffaloes milk, Toda women are not allowed to touch these animals. Tribal women largely spend their time in domestic activities such as cooking, cleaning and embroidery, rather than in agriculture or ritual activities. Mandelbaum (1989b, p.8) argues that:

Women can have nothing to do with sacred buffaloes, or with the rituals and temples for their care. They can have little to do with ordinary buffaloes either, so the women take very small part in economic production or religious practice.

On the other hand, Walker (1989, p.190) shows that men have 'explored occupations other than herding, although they have long resisted the more arduous and grubby tasks of farming for a living'. Men own household property and buffaloes, whereas women 'inherit nothing except a small dowry, usually jewellery' (p.194). Though female infanticide was prohibited in 1819, the Todas have practiced this 'with some regularity' and there is still 'evidence of isolated cases' (Walker, 1986). The Toda Women are excluded from participating in many of the traditional cultural events, such as entering into their Temple premises, that characterize the Toda cultural life.

This exclusion from their own religious ceremonies influences the Toda women who have developed an affinity towards Christianity. Except during their traditional festival seasons (during this time they are expected to stay in their 'munds'), women are permitted by their husbands to go to Church and attend prayer meetings held largely in Ooty town. Some

Christian missionaries also preach that the true followers of Jesus should not listen to entertainment and film- based programs. Hence, the Toda woman who follow Christianity closely tend to ignore film songs that are the staple of much broadcasting and use radio for information and Christian broadcasts. Men choose to listen to the radio news, especially in the morning and think agricultural programs on radio are useful to them (Jayaprakash & Shoesmith, 2000).

While Kota women usually have good access to radio and television their access is regularly interrupted by restrictive Kota cultural practices. During their menstrual period, women are secluded from their routine life and required to stay in a separate house that are built for this purpose.

Figure: 4



A Kota woman in front of the 'separated' house

During these three days they are unable to watch television or listen to the radio. Sometimes women take magazines to this house and read. On the fourth day they can enter their house and can only cook in the Kitchen on the fifth day. During their absence the men cook and take care of household activities.

Apart from domestic household work, Kannikaran women contribute to their family income through their traditional agricultural work, such as the management of irrigation, weeding, harvesting, storing and so on.

Parthasarathy (1990, p.129), a cultural anthropologist, argues that although Kanni women are invited to participate in the decision-making process of their community, they are 'silent spectators' of the activities and decisions of their community leader '*muttukani*'.

Radio is considered a 'family medium' by tribal households mainly because the radio set is largely 'shared' among the listeners in a family. On some occasions, a radio set is even 'passed on' to neighbors and relatives who do not yet own a radio set. This way of using radio in households affects the different ways in which men and women use radio in their everyday lives. Men listen to radio before they go to work and after they come back from work whereas women have different listening patterns based around the rhythms of domestic life. In the morning before they go to work, men listen to news, devotional songs and agricultural programs. By contrast, women listen to a different set of programs that are geared towards spirituality and entertainment rather than pure information or sporting programs.

The Feminization of Radio genres

I have established above that gender is a major influence, when people listen to radio, how they listen to it, what programs they select to listen to and how these choices impact upon everyday life. In this section, I will expand on these points, with an analysis of the actual programs selected by women and men respectively, concentrating further on the reasons they provide for their choices with a view to offering an explanation of the significance of gender for listenership in this context.

Hobson (1980, p.114), who argues that women find little interest in news:

Overall the programs fall into the categories of popular drama and light entertainment, and although it is obvious that the women reject news and the political content of current affairs programs, it would be wrong to contend that they do not have access or exposure to news or politics.

People in a domestic situation listen to a huge range of program types, even in the remote rural areas I am focussing on. Indeed the richness of the tribal listening and viewing experience is impressive, but it is impossible to deal adequately with all facets of that experience. I have restricted my analysis to a limited number of program types that women prefer to listen to in tribal settlements. The responses and comments elicited from the various participants in my field research illustrate the importance of these program types. Since media use is largely determined by the 'media structure' and 'social structure', the discussions include these important factors. McQuail (1997, p.67) describes how:

Social structure refers to "social facts" such as those of education, income, gender, place of residence, position in the life-cycle, and so on, that have a strong determining influence on general outlook and behaviour. Media structure refers to the relatively constant array of channels, choices and content that is available in a given place and time.

After a general discussion of the listening patterns of women in a domestic setting, I will analyze how and why women listen to Christian programs, news and entertainment programs such as drama and songs.

Consuming Radio: Tribal Women

Both young and middle age women seem to choose their programs by tuning to different radio stations, unlike elderly women who mainly depend on their sons to do the selection of different radio stations and programs. Kamala, a mother of a 16 year-old boy, is a Kannikaran woman from the Villusari Malai settlement who has a radio at home. While talking about radio use in her house she said, 'Only my son tunes the radio'. Suseela, a 32-year-old mother of three from Piravilai settlement said, 'My husband tunes radio at 6 am in the morning and we listen until 7 am as I do the domestic work'. Ramba, a 35-year-old Kota woman from the Tiruchikadi village said, 'My husband tunes radio in our house'. A fifty-year-old illiterate Kota woman said, 'my son tunes radio in our house'. 'My youngest son switches on the radio' a Kota woman from Solur Kokkal informed me. My field visits and

interaction with women from the remote areas of the Kanyakumari district also revealed that women generally leave this activity to males and in some cases they think that the radio set is too complex a technology for them to operate.

For tribal women, radio listening is considered to be an important activity, because they have limited exposure to other media of such as newspapers and television. When it comes to newspaper-reading men have ample opportunity to read the papers when they go to town to buy groceries or other things. But women are generally confined to their remote settlements and have little or no access to newspapers. Radio is and has been, a major source of information and entertainment. Women, who work as agricultural laborers, work close to their settlements or villages. Sen (1997, p.148) argues that 'women laborers generally tend to work fairly close to their homes, or in work situations where co-workers are other women, or men from their own family/community. Women tend to work more in the 'private' or semi-public spaces. This practice, which is highly prevalent among tribal women, prevents them from having access to other media as well. An 18 year-old Kannikaran woman, Pindhu, married with three children said,

I don't read newspaper at all. I heard information on polio drops campaign from Chennai Radio

Tribal women also said that although they did not always have access to radio, they could sometimes hear film songs from a neighbor's radio. In the following section I will discuss how women listen to entertainment programs, such as drama and songs, based on my observation and interviews with the tribal women. I argue that tribal women share and negotiate their time between radio listening and television viewing. In other words, while women listen to radio, they also spare time to watch television and often this pattern of dual media use determines their selection of programs as well.

Women, Drama and Songs

Programs that address women's issues and deal with matters that are of interest to women are rather limited on AIR (Anuradha, 1993), and this is particularly true for tribal women. ORS involves tribal women in its various programs, but due to its limited resources in terms of staff, programs that are meant for women, it fails to make a much impact on women listeners. Hence, women successfully tried and found overseas Tamil radio stations (Singapore, Malaysia) that broadcast more songs, drama and Christian programs. Although tribal men listen to radio drama, women from the hill areas of the Nilgiris and the Pechiparai (Kanyakumari district), prefer and enjoy radio drama in preference to all other genres. Hobson (1980) argues that women prefer entertainment programs rather than educational and informative programs. She observes:

It is clear that the news, current affairs, political programs and scientific programs, together with portrayals of war (...) are actively rejected by the women. They will leave the room rather than sit there while the news is on (Hobson, 1980, p.111).

While Hobson is referring to English urban housewives, the responses given by the tribal women tend to endorse Hobson's views, with the exception of radio news, which is important to the women in my study in India. While talking about her favorite program *Shanthi* from *Kandhal mund* said:

Though "Thirai Isai" [film song] is my favorite we listen to dramas on radio and we feel dramas are good to listen on radio.

A Kannikaran woman from Villusari Malai said she would tune in to Madras (Chennai) radio station at 8.30 pm every Wednesday to listen to drama. Since low power radio stations such as ORS and Nagercoil do not have drama production studios, tribal audiences tune to the major regional radio stations such as Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirapalli and Tirunelveli for drama programs. At other times, low power radio stations relay dramas from regional stations. While answering a question on her favorite programs on

radio, Shanthi, without any hesitation said that she preferred news and drama.

AIR celebrates a drama festival every year by broadcasting award-winning radio plays from different regions of India. Often these plays are translated into Tamil and broadcast from the stations of AIR in Tamil Nadu. Women mentioned to me that they never missed listening to these series of radio plays. More importantly, those who do not have a radio, go to their neighbors' house to listen to radio drama. In some situations, where neighbor's houses are located very near to them, members from non-radio households listen to radio drama by staying in their own house and listening to the programs that come from their neighbors radio. When it is hard to listen, women go to their neighbors' house and ask them to increase the volume of the radio so that they can listen from home. Women are aware of the broadcast times of drama from different radio stations.

However, the arrival of cable and satellite television has had some influence on radio listening patterns. Women from television owning households are attracted by the television serials (Soaps) in Tamil and tend to ignore radio drama. Meena, a 28 year-old Kota woman from the Kollimalai settlement, has both radio and television. While talking about radio drama she said,

We used to listen to radio drama but now we don't listen.

Meena spends her time in the evening watching television serials and films. Women and children from neighboring households also visit them during this broadcast time and watch the serials on television. However, women who are actively involved with external activities, such as participating in women's welfare associations, give preference to news. Karunyamma, a 48-year-old Kota woman, who is also a convenor of 'Madhar sangam' (Women's Association), listens to devotional songs and news regularly. She does not listen to drama because she says she does not have the time to listen to it. Ramani, a 25 year-old Kota woman from the Kollimalai village, said she tunes to Coimbatore just for the drama and all other stations for songs and drama. It is interesting to note this comment, because during

my visit to the Coimbatore radio station I met some very enthusiastic drama producers and was told that Coimbatore has the best drama production unit.

Women prefer to listen to film songs from all stations while doing their domestic work. They know at what time these stations broadcast film songs and tune to these stations at the appropriate time. Apart from tuning to the regional and low power radio stations of AIR, women listen to overseas radio broadcasts such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka for Tamil film songs. Krishnaveni, a 36 year-old Kota woman from Kollimalal village, said:

We tried to tune to the second band [short wave] one day and we found these stations. From then on we regularly tune into these stations.

Apart from radio drama, women are fond of film songs and listen to them while they cook in the kitchen.

Women, who have access to television, consider radio as an alternative medium because in the smaller towns television programs are received only in the evening. Whenever television programs are unavailable they tune into radio. Shanthi said,

If there were no programs on television, I would listen to radio.

Since television programs are not available in the morning in this region, women listen to radio in the morning while they perform their domestic work. Neela, a 30 year-old Kota woman from Tiruchikadi village, emphasizing the importance of radio listening, said:

We work at home only when radio is on. In other words, when we are at home we tune to radio all the time.

Shanthi from Kandhal mund said:

Whatever may be the program in the morning we listen to radio

Jeya Misse, the first post graduate woman from a Toda community also from Kandhal mund said,

Evening **usually** we watch TV and in the morning it is **always** radio [emphasis added].

Women, irrespective of the nature of programs, tune into the radio in the morning and listen to various programs such as news, film songs, devotional songs, agricultural programs and so on. Shanthi is from Kanthal mund, which is located near Ooty town where people are mostly employed in the Government or semi Government services, and consequently have access to electricity and thus television. While discussing how they used both radio and television she said,

We keep radio and television in separate rooms when we listen to radio we switch off the television and when we watch TV we switch off the radio.

Toda women also listen to radio while performing their traditional handicraft work (which is very popular with the international tourists who visit Nilgiris). Those women who do not have radio at home also visit their neighbors' house to listen to radio. Kaveri, a 28-year-old Kota women had neither radio nor television, she visited her neighbors house to listen to the radio.

Other than the entertainment programs, such as film songs and drama women love to listen to Christian programs broadcast from the stations of Christian missionaries within India and overseas. Tribal women especially from the Toda and Kannikaran communities listen to Christian programs because many of them follow Christianity for various reasons. The Toda women have virtually no place in the ritual ceremonies of Toda festivals and are not supposed to enter Toda temples.

Figure: 5



Toda Temple

There has been an historic influx of both Indian and European missionaries (Walker, 1986), who have influenced many Toda women to follow Christianity. This shift in faith has encouraged Toda women to ignore entertainment programs and in particular the popular Tamil film song programs (previously popular in their preference of programs) and to choose informative programs such as news, local documentaries and features. Similarly, Rao (1987, p.17), studying the VCR and its influence in South India argued that, 'In the community there is a general, though unspoken, disapproval of films by the church. Consequently public viewing in cinema theatre is avoided by the parish members'. Rao also observes that:

Indian women in rural areas, either from middle class or traditional families, rarely go out in public with their husbands or other male members of the family. Cinema theatres have always catered to this social custom by providing separate viewing facilities for women (Rao, 1987, p.17).

Toda women often feel excluded in their own community. Women, usually accompanied by children, attend Christian prayer meetings held in Ooty and at a few Toda settlements. The men do not seem to oppose their wives attending these prayer meetings. They claim that their wives are not 'converted'. Men consider the participation of boys to be important in their own ritual ceremonies, and strongly feel that boys will not be influenced by

Christian missionaries. Some of the missionaries have media centers in India, which broadcast Christian programs in the morning and evening. For example, Lutheran ministries (India), FEBA (Far East Broadcasting Associates of India), broadcast Christian programs in a number of Indian languages including Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi and Tamil. A 20-year-old woman from Thalapatheri mund tunes her radio set early in the morning to listen to Christian programs. When I asked her 'what do you expect to listen to when you tune your radio set?' she said,

I listen to only 'sathiyam' [Christian program]. In the morning they broadcast from 5.30 am to 6.00 am and in the evening from 8 p.m. to 8.15 p.m.

On Sundays some of the Toda women also meet in one of the Toda settlements (Attakor mund) and participate in prayer meetings. During my interaction with the Toda people they said, 'Christian Missionaries also preach that the true followers of Jesus should not listen to film songs and film based entertainment programs'. A 24-year-old housewife from 'Pettathol mund' said,

I don't listen to film songs at all, I listen to 'Aandavarudaya sathiyam' [words of Jesus].

The affinity towards a new set of religious values, coupled with the preaching of some of the Christian missionaries to avoid entertainment programs like 'film songs', persuade women to shun entertainment programs. The Toda men are also aware that their women do not prefer to listen to film songs on radio. An illiterate Toda man from Tharnadu mund, while talking about his wife's interest said, 'film songs do not interest her'. Toda women who have not been inducted into Christianity listen to drama, devotional songs and film songs. There are also personal reasons for some women to listen to Christian broadcasts. For example, Prema, a 42 year-old Kannikaran woman from the Manalikkadu settlement who is a mother of three. She said that a few years back her hands and legs were paralyzed, and many prayers were said and many sacrifices were made but it was to no avail. Later she was prayed for by the members of the 'Gospel United

Fellowship' and healed of all her ailments; since then she has followed Christianity and everyday she listens to Christian broadcast that come from 'FEBA' radio in Manila, the Philippines. She loves to listen to programs that promote faith in Christianity and such programs are more concentrated in repeating verses from the Bible and Christian songs. Prema, her two sons and daughter, who also follow Christianity, love to listen to such programs.

Ramya, a 42 year-old Toda woman and mother of two, listens to agricultural programs women's programs and Christian programs as well. Often she said she would use the tape recorder to listen to Christian songs. Therasa, a 47 year-old Toda woman from Thalapatheri mund goes to her son's house to listen to the radio because she does not have a radio at home. She goes to Church every Sunday. She walks three kilometers to board a bus and then goes to Ooty town to participate in church events.

Masculine Radio

In this section I want to show that the tribal men in South India use radio in a way that is quite distinctive from women. It is marked by their understanding of their own culture, but at the same time it is characterized by an understanding that radio can, and does, expand their horizons, commercially, culturally and socially. The men tended to listen to a narrower and more specific set of programs than the women that include agricultural broadcasts, news and current affairs, and sport.

After listening to agricultural programs, many of the men argue that they have been influenced by the information received from the radio, not only from ORS but also from various other regional radio stations such as Coimbatore, Chennai, Madurai and so on. Pothalikuttan, a 44-year-old Toda man, who is a social worker from Kandhal mund located near Ooty town, listens to the agricultural programs every day. He shares the information that he receives from radio with his colleagues and family. After listening to his interest in agricultural programs and his caring interest towards his community I asked him why he had such an attitude. His reply was instructive:

I have informed people about cabbage cultivation and even I thought of experimenting with some new vegetable cultivation after hearing some of the agricultural broadcasts from Ooty radio.

Responses like this may appear trivial on the one hand, but on the other they illustrate just how the radio can effect change in a community. On the basis of a single program it appears that Pothalkuttan is prepared to experiment with food production, but this decision is in effect cumulative, as I will show. The tribal audiences express opinions about the ORS programs that are relevant to their lifestyle and there is a sense that ORS attempts to empower indigenous audiences through its programming.

The introduction of ORS happened at a point in time when the Todas, who used to lease out ('*Kanthayam*') their land to immigrant populations, shifted from pastoralism to agriculture. Each Toda family is given five acres of land by the Government to cultivate. In the past, Toda families tended to lease all five acres of land to the migrant population from the plains such as the Tamils or Kannadigas. In return for the lease a family would receive Rs. 3000 to 5000 per year; a considerable sum in the Toda community. The leased section of the land is called "*Kanthayam*".

Now the Todas are beginning to cultivate at least two to three acres of land for themselves to generate income. This trend is confirmed in the amount of fieldwork a Toda man undertakes. This shift in economic activity also represents a change in the social status of the Todas through their entry into a cash economy also signifies their collective entry into modern society. As a 30 year-old illiterate man pointed out:

We used to give all our land for '*kanthayam*'; nowadays we don't give it. We are doing on our own now.

Increasingly the Todas are involved in agriculture rather than pastoralism, which increase the interest in learning new methods in agriculture and applying them. A 30-year-old Toda man pointed out that:

If we learn to cultivate then we need not give our land for '*Kanthayam*' and also we can gain good profit from our land and work

Agriculture has recently become a part of their lifestyle and they actively seek out agricultural programs on ORS in order to enhance their economic development. A 35 year-old Toda man informed me,

We believe agricultural programs are useful.

This view on the usefulness of these programs is reinforced by a 34 year-old Toda man who said:

Radio gives us information on what seed to use at how many months.

The change in occupations of the Todas and the shift in production has resulted in a need for agriculture-related information and knowledge. It is this need for a new kind of information that is being satisfied, to an extent, through the agricultural programs of ORS. The shift from pastoralism to agriculture introduced a new time regime into the male Toda lives that relates to the use of radio by the tribal communities. In the earlier days, the Toda men spent much of their time looking after the buffaloes, as buffaloes were their main source of income. A 30-year-old Toda man from 'Muthunadu Mund' said:

[In] Those days there was no agriculture. All in all only buffaloes, we extracted milk and make ghee and sell them. Buffaloes were enough for us.

Listening to the radio is a major factor in the change of time regimes related to occupation in tribal communities. In the past, their economy revolved around buffaloes and their products, such as milk and ghee, as the comments above show. Later, the population of the buffalo decreased. A Toda man explaining the reason for the decrease in the buffalo population, as a severe blow to their lives said very sadly:

We are a small population of Toda people and had enough buffaloes but ... now some 12 or 13 years back due to some sickness in this area about 100 buffaloes died. Those that went out did not come back. Now it is hard and we cannot manage with only buffaloes. In addition to agriculture in the mornings and evenings we look after the buffaloes for additional income.

The decrease in the number of buffaloes amongst the Toda community and the welfare schemes initiated by the Government (see, Walker, 1986, pp.280-282) prompted the Todas to concentrate on agriculture. When I asked a 39-year-old Toda man, who is an agriculturist; educated up to fifth standard (year 5), from Malai Veethi mund, *'Why do you listen to agricultural programs'* he said,

For our improvement, and development. We have to do this [agriculture] for our income. We get milk for three or four months, from buffaloes, after that we don't get milk from them. So we have to do agriculture.

This shift to agriculture means that they cultivate crops like potatoes, carrots, cabbages, beans and snow peas. The importance of the radio to the gaining of agricultural knowledge is recognized by the Toda, who now realize that ORS can be a potential channel for information related to all the aspects of agriculture.

In this context, there was also a shift in the concept of programming of AIR stations, radio personnel began to encourage bottom-up and horizontal communication (Mody, 1991, 1992) with radio stations, such as, ORS to encourage and initiate programs more for the ordinary citizens, than for elite participants. Mody (1991) argues that the 'bottom-up' approach should be followed in order to make agricultural communication through mass media, be more productive. In other words, the target audiences must be given an opportunity to participate in farm programs to share messages with the target audiences. It is also essential to encourage discussion amongst target audiences, through 'horizontal communication' to develop a consensus. Once the horizontal communication is enhanced it is possible for the target audiences or the farmers to communicate to the extension agents or to the media producers. Then the message could flow from the producers or the researchers to the audiences. In the past, AIR usually invited agricultural officers, scientists, or agricultural experts to the studios, where the staff in charge of farm programs asked the experts a set of prepared, rigid questions.

These programs epitomized the top-down approach to development broadcasting that has characterized much of India's attempts to harness the

media for development purposes. Not only was the information presented in technical and uncompromising ways, but also the programs ultimately patronized their audiences. These types of programs are slowly disappearing from AIR, and at ORS they try to avoid them.

These changes have been noted by an illiterate Toda man aged 27 from 'Thalapatheri Mund', who said he could follow the information broadcast on ORS because the discourse of both the presenters and the participants is relevant to today's Toda lifestyle. A 30-year-old man from 'Muthunadu Mund' put it differently. He compared Ooty radio station with a major AIR regional radio station (Coimbatore) and said:

The Ooty radio program content is relevant to us because it is our business. Coimbatore broadcasts programs on plains but we do not know those methods. It is not applicable here. Here Ooty radio is talking about something relevant to us, so we can follow.

Almost all the Toda men I met with in twenty different settlements expressed similar opinions. Collectively, they think the ORS broadcasts are relevant programs that are directly applicable to their everyday life. Moreover, most of the programs are now produced in the field, whilst previously they were produced in the studio.

Figure: 6



Program Executive of ORS, Mr. Kamalakkannan recording a cultural program with tribal women in an 'out door' production.

The people who participate and present these programs are from the Nilgiri region, and ORS largely invites and encourages tribal audiences to present and participate in these programs. Another advantage of local participation, as expressed by the people, is that it is easy for them to understand the modulation and diction of the local accent.

Audiences, particularly tribal men, in this region seem to remember and recall the contents of the program. However, they do not seem to recall the brand names of pesticides or fertilisers, probably due to the fact that these product names are in English, reflecting the complexity of the discourse of development. However, recollection of agricultural information is especially important for illiterate audiences. Pothees Kuttan, a 35 year-old Toda male, observed during the course of our interview at his house:

We need to change to some other different pesticides ... how much we put for one acre. Now we measure with our hands, they inform us with ratio how many kilos we must put for 1 acre.

He went on to confess:

I don't remember the name of the pesticides.

However, it is clear that Pothees Kuttan understands what agricultural programs are saying to him. They inform and educate him about 'something new', he realizes that one has to measure and mix fertilizers in specific ratios. But he is unable to recall specific details critical for the measurement of fertilizer use. In another interview with a 27 year-old Illiterate Toda man, the same issue emerged. He tried very hard to recollect what he had heard from a radio broadcast but said after a pause:

I don't remember the name of the pesticides. But how to work on the field, which month to cultivate these information we can remember.

A 39-year-old man, Telli Kuttan, offered one example of the interaction of radio information and interpersonal communication:

On radio they say only three fourth of the information on an issue. But we get information from other agriculturists who work in the next or surrounding field, we ask them what they use, and use them.

The following response from an illiterate, 27 year- old Toda male agriculturist represents how sophisticated the Toda male listeners have become in respect to radio.

We learn new things everyday. There is certain information, which we do not know, and those who work along with us may not know. But these informations are given through radio.

Mody (1992) argues that mass media can be used more effectively than the extension agents to communicate with the diverse nature of audiences. There are many limitations involved in using extension agents for agricultural communication. Mody observes that in many societies it is not culturally accepted for the male extension agents to talk to women. Moreover, the audiences prefer to know varied subjects such as horticulture, fisheries, forestry and so on, in which an extension may not be knowledgeable. Mass media such as radio can complement the interpersonal channels, like the extension agents. Above all, radio can reach

small and large farmers effectively. Mody argues 'The major promise of mass media has been faster extension of quality information to more farmers, especially, in areas under served by the extension service'(Mody, 1992, p.83).

However, it is quite different for the Kotas. A 20-year-old Kota man, Murugesan from Tiruchikadi village, said he would prefer Tamil film songs and drama on the radio even though he practices agriculture. When asked what he does when agricultural programs are broadcast he quickly responded:

I would switch off the radio.

While discussing the power relations between the broadcasters and audiences Scannel (1995) argued that the power rests with the audiences.

And this is because no one can make anyone listen to or watch anything on radio and TV. If listeners and viewers do not like what they find they can simply switch over or switch off. Therefore, broadcasters must organise their affairs with the interests of listeners and viewers in mind by virtue of the gap between the place of transmission and the place of reception and of the consequent inability of broadcasters to control the behaviour of their audiences (Scannell, 1995, p.10).

The analysis of many Kota listeners from various Kota settlements reveals that agricultural programs are unpopular among Kotas. On the other hand, agricultural programs broadcast on the regional radio Coimbatore, which is located about 100 KM away from the Nilgiris, are considered irrelevant to the Nilgiri conditions by the Todas, but are very popular among Kota audiences because they are broadcast in the morning. One reason for this trend is that ORS does not have morning broadcasts and Kotas largely tune into the radio in the morning for agricultural programs. ORS broadcasts agricultural programs in the evening. Like the Kota audiences, Todas also prefer to listen to development programs like agricultural programming in the mornings rather than the evenings (See chapter 7).

Balaraman, a Kota man, listens to the radio every day. His radio set is continuously connected to the power supply and he always has batteries to

back up for power cuts. He listens to radio for relaxation and tunes in whenever he is free at home. On listening to development programs such as agricultural programs, Balaraman said,

I don't listen to agricultural programs. I mainly use radio for information and entertainment programs.

By information, Balaraman made it clear that he means news and current affairs and by entertainment programs, he means film songs and drama. Balaraman and his wife also listen to radio for film songs. One main reason for this pattern is that the Kotas believe that they are familiar with the basic skills of agriculture, which are required to cultivate their lands, basically through practice and tradition. Although locally relevant agricultural programs are being broadcast from ORS, based on the local practices, Kota men tend to ignore them. So why do the Kota men own a radio set and still purchase new sets to replace the old and repaired ones? A 34 year-old agricultural laborer, when asked 'What do you think about agricultural programs? Do you think agricultural programs are useful? Or do you think you are satisfied with just film songs from radio?' Unexpectedly replied:

No, No, if we have a radio set, we can listen to all the radio stations. Even if Prime Minister dies, we can know early in the morning, in the first news bulletin... otherwise, how do we get to know these kind of news?

Another respondent commented that he used radio: 'Primarily for news, when we use it for news, we can also use it for agriculture'. Radio is widely used for listening to news for the reasons we have discussed earlier in this chapter, i.e., the high illiteracy rate among tribal communities, lack of power supply and so on. These reasons prompted the tribal communities to prefer the radio for listening to news. It is also interesting to note here that ethnographic fieldwork conducted on radio listening in Bristol (see, Tacchi, 2000a), reveals that when discussing radio, men tend to give functional, rational reasons for listening, whilst women talk about the emotional response and how it makes them feel.

The instinctive nature of the need to communicate also motivates audiences to listen to radio broadcasts. Although Toda 'munds' (settlements) are scattered in the Nilgiri hills, Pothalikuttan, a social worker among the Todas, visits his fellow Toda men in their settlements and offers whatever help they perceive they need. He points out that his work encourages him to listen to news because he sees current affairs and news information as important sources of information for his people. A 30 year-old Kota man, Thiru Murugan from Tiruchikadi village, also an vocational diploma holder, said though Kota men watch news from regional Tamil satellite television, radio is the first medium to inform news in the morning. He said,

Radio news in the morning is important. I listen to news at 6.45 and 7.15 am everyday. By listening to radio we come to know roughly what is happening around the world.

Although by location, tribal audiences are secluded from the mainstream population, listening to the radio helps them to keep in touch with what is happening at local, regional, national and also at international levels. Through cable, they have access to regional satellite television in Tamil, like Sun TV, Raj TV and Vijay TV. They broadcast news in Tamil and I was curious to know whether this exposure has had any effect on radio listening amongst male Kota audiences. Answering a question on this, Thiru Murugan said:

I don't think in our village men ignore radio when they have access to cable TV at home. We watch Sun TV news and we also listen to radio news because Sun TV is one type of news and radio is another type of news. We see whether the news is the same or not.

Similarly Kota men have had a limited exposure to newspapers and they visit barbershops and teashops in their village to read the newspapers. A 28-year-old Kota man, Krishnan from Sholurur Kokkat talking about radio and newspapers said:

In the morning I listen to radio news. I also read newspapers (whenever time permits) and they cover what the radio misses. On radio they mainly deal with national and regional affairs.

We don't get local news [on radio]. But newspapers cover local news.

ORS and other regional radio stations have national and regional news bulletins, but they do not have local news bulletins. Tamil newspapers have local correspondents in various small towns who help them to cover local news. One of the other problems of low power radio station like ORS and local radio stations is that the radio signals are not properly received because of their low frequencies. A 42 year-old Kanni man from Villusari Malai settlement told me that while his radio receives news from BBC world service it does not receive signals from the Nagercoil radio station, though he owns a three-band radio with FM.

Tribal men, particularly in the Kota settlements, criticized the ORS for its repetitive programs, especially the tribal songs program called '*malai aruvi*'. Singaraj Kambattan, a 20 year-old Kota man, participated and played Kota traditional music programs in the Malai Aruvi program of ORS.

Figure: 7



Mr. Singaraj Kambattan (a Kota man) listening to radio in his house

Although he did not criticize the repetition of this program he said:

I listen to radio everyday ...after news they broadcast our songs. Five months back they recorded our program. Every week they broadcast Kota songs. Yesterday also they re broadcast our program.

Although Kota men welcome locally relevant cultural programs, repetition of programs does not encourage them to stick to them. Kamalakkannan, a 26 year-old Kota man, has a radio at home and listens to radio regularly; and is disappointed with the repetitive nature of the *Malai Aruvi* program and said, 'They are repeating the same program so it is boring'. It is clear that the audiences are disappointed by the repetition of '*Malai Aruvi*'. Sivan, a 24 year-old Kota man from Kollimalai village, said:

We listen to Ooty radio only when they broadcast Kota songs. Other days we don't tune at all. They recorded Kota songs long back and repeat the same broadcast again and again. They should come here often and produce new different programs. We are bored. Their programs are boring.

Although Kota men are unhappy with the repetition of *Malai Aruvi*, they recognize that such programs are the main strength of ORS. However, they also expect ORS not to broadcast the same songs so many times. In Sholur Kokkal, tribal songs, especially Kota songs, are popular among children. A 15-year- old Kota boy, Bellan, who is studying tenth standard (year 10) at Sholur tribal school, has a radio and a tape recorder at home. Although he goes to his neighbor's house to watch cable television, (mainly Sun TV) while participating in a focus group discussion in his school, said:

I listen to ORS everyday and listen to *Malai Aruvi*. When they broadcast Kota songs we listen, we give priority to our songs.

This program is very popular because these traditional songs are exclusively meant for tribal communities, and ORS broadcasts this program at 6.40 pm, after the regional news bulletin. Sankaran, a 28 year-old Kota man, has a radio, but does not have a television set at home. Although he goes to his neighbor's house to watch cable television such as Sun TV or Raj TV, he listens to ORS and says, 'I like ORS for tribal songs. Our people give programs in ORS'. Sankaran prefers tribal songs because the people from any tribal community in the Nilgiris present the programs and he is not

concerned whether they represent his own community or not. They also think of '*malai aruvi*', as part of their culture and have special liking for this program. A 24 year-old Kota man from Sholur Kokkal said, '*They [ORS] broadcast our "kalecharam" [culture] so I listen to this program*'.

Although women prefer to listen to film songs and drama, men tend to ignore these programs, however, it does not mean that men do not listen to these programs. In the remote Toda and Kannikaran settlements, men listen to radio drama and film songs with their family, wife and children. This is mainly because these settlements are often deprived of electricity and access to television is difficult. This situation is made clear by a 34 year-old illiterate Toda man, who lives in Thalapatheri mund, which is located seventeen kilometers from Ooty town. He listens to radio drama 'sharply' at 8 p.m every Thursday, Wednesday and Saturday. During Independence Day, AIR Coimbatore broadcast a drama based on a theme related to Independence. When I asked him about the drama, he said, 'super' and narrated the story line and theme to me in great detail. His experiences are not unusual for men who live in communities deprived of electricity. In settlements that have more modern infrastructure, men have different radio listening profiles.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the importance of gender in forming radio listening habits. The gendering of radio audiences reflects the social structure of tribal society. Tribal audiences use radio in order to improve their knowledge and these radio programs expanded their horizons. The Todas have only recently become agriculturalists, and their consumption of agricultural programs has already broadened their understanding of the world and directly contributed to their economic well being. The Kotas have been comparatively better placed than the Todas in respect to modern lifestyle, but they also use the radio to broaden their horizons and increase their knowledge of the world. Age is an important factor that often determines how tribal people use radio, which is the main focus of next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

YOUTH, RADIO AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Introduction

We have yet to think deeply, about how age affects radio use—how older women, teenage girls and pre-teens use the medium – or ethnic minority women's relationship with national radio. We have barely begun to develop sensitive tools to identify and analyse how different radio stations and programmes address women (Karpf, 2000, xvi)

The above quote illustrates that age can be an important factor (or variable) in determining the different patterns of use, of radio, by various distinct audience groups. When planning radio programs, it is customary for program producers to think about their target audiences and particularly the age groups of those target audiences. McQuail (1997, p.31), argues that 'people from a particular educational or occupational milieu, for instance, are assumed to have a certain kind of taste, and the same applies to age and gender'. Audience Research Units of AIR often ask in their questionnaires the age of respondents so as to analyze the impact of programs based on age. While studying children's radio listening (defined here as those aged below thirteen years), the transcription and analysis of the data reveals that, apart from age, access to media ownership at home also influences listening behavior patterns.

In this chapter I will aim to show how age, in particular youth, and the possession of radio sets influences listening patterns amongst tribal audiences. The level of access to different forms of electronic media such as radio, terrestrial television, cable and satellite television, is further determined by a number of factors, as discussed below. However, it is important to say

why I am focussing on the young rather than other age groups. It is clear that the young tribal audiences of today had grown up in a media environment completely different to that of their parents. They are, for example, much more confident than their mothers in handling media technology. Moreover, they are more discriminating in their media consumption in that they listen or watch what they want to hear or see rather than for some social, economic purpose. Thus, entertainment is the principle genre of the young. In this respect their media habits are conformist, like those of the developed nations (see below). However, in the context of remote tribal communities this behavior may be regarded as quite radical. It is for these reasons that I focus on the young and their media consumption.

My analysis of the media usage of tribal children is largely based on the patterns of television and radio set ownership within the Toda community. The data reveals there are four categories of audiences among the Toda children:

1. Children whose families do not own a radio or television set;
2. Children whose families own only a radio set;
3. Children whose families own both a radio and a television set;
4. Children whose families own only a television set;

The focus on the place of radio and television in the life of children, teenagers and the elderly, the three neglected groups of audience studies in Southern India is important, as it broadens the scope of this study, making its findings more reliable.

There is a massive amount of literature about the relationship of children to television in the West or developed countries, much of it highly contentious (Buckingham, 1998; Dorr, 1986; Hodge & Tripp, 1998). Basically, the huge number of studies conducted into the perceived effects of television on children has been directed at the issue of violence. Whether this continued exposure to violence on television makes children more violent is the focus of such studies. Studies conducted in India often neglected the children live in remote areas and concentrated on urban children (CFAR, 2001; Unnikrishnan & Bajpai, 1996). This material has little direct relevance

to the radio listening and television viewing habits of tribal children in the remote rural areas of South India.

Children below ten years were not included as respondents in the studies conducted by the Audience Research unit of AIR, which periodically conducts 'listenership surveys' in many parts of India (A.R.U., 1990a, 1990b). My Master of Philosophy dissertation on AIR, Nagercoil (Jayaprakash, 1993) following the pattern of A.R.U. ignored the members of the audiences aged below fifteen years. However, informants below the age of thirteen years were included as children for the purpose of analysis in this chapter. The listeners between the age groups of thirteen and nineteen were included as teen-age audiences. There are very limited overseas studies conducted on radio and how age influences radio listening (ABC, 1995; Brown, 1990; Carroll, Silbergeld, Beachum, Perry, & Pluscht, 1993; Christenson, 1985).

Tribal Children

Toda children's exposure to the media is different from the adult exposure. They listen to the radio at different times of the day compared to their parents and grandparents. More significantly, children use media principally for entertainment, unlike adult Toda men, who mainly use radio for information especially agricultural information, and women who use radio for solace. Further, children are faced with the concerns of their parents about what impact radio listening and television viewing will have on their school/work and the inability to assist in the house and in the preparation of food. Christenson et al (1985, p.339), argues that there might be positive or negative consequences in children using radio as a secondary activity or background music.

If background music helps pass the time or enhances social interaction, its net impact may be positive. On the other hand, background listening may well have dysfunctional consequences, especially if it accompanies cognitively demanding primary activities. For many children, homework is done to the beat of the local FM rock station; the potential distractive effects of this practice warrant empirical exploration. Even for older children, it is difficult to imagine how music in the

background could systematically improve performance on complex and demanding tasks. The constant presence of background music could well interfere with academic performance in the long run.

These matters are particularly acute amongst the Todas, as I will show below. Finally, there is the fact that AIR radio produces programs specifically for children, but they fail to attract the Toda children as an audience. The reasons for this are complex, as I will show, but one of the main reasons for the failure of AIR to capture its target child audience is because the Toda children prefer to listen to entertainment programs like film songs and drama on the radio.

Children whose family do not possess radio or television

Children who do not have a radio or television set at home go to their neighbors' houses to listen to a tape recorder, or to the radio or to watch television. When there are no television households in their own settlements, they listen to radio at their neighbor's house. During school holidays and weekends they also go to neighboring settlements who have television sets. When they go, they mainly watch drama, feature films, and film-based programs. Occasionally, when they visit their relatives from town munda they get to watch television and also listen to film songs on radio.

Power supply is not the only factor that prevents them having access to television. Even in settlements, which have power supply, we can find houses that do not have television sets because of economic reasons. A 12-year-old Toda boy, Pratheesh Kuttan, who lives in Atha munda, does not own a radio or television set, because they are poor. He goes to his friend's house to listen to a tape recorder. He points out:

We don't have radio, television or tape recorder, so I don't listen to radio, I don't listen to film songs, drama agricultural program from radio. Mostly I listen to tape recorder. When I go to Alex's [his friend's name] house, I listen to tape recorder.

It is interesting to mention here that work, Carroll's collaborative work (1993) conducted in the United States, argued that 'their (teenagers)

tolerance for radio programming declines and they listen less to radio and more to tapes and CDs'. They also found that male teens are more inclined towards television and pre recorded music rather than radio. In contrast, they argued that 'female teens rated radio as their highest used medium, followed by television' (see also, Brown, 1990; Christenson, 1985). Although the social, economic and cultural factors are entirely different amongst the hill audiences in Southern India to those of the respondents of Carroll et al. (1993) and Christenson et.al (1985) studies, the findings are similar. I also found that teenage girls are more involved listeners than the teenage boys. Teenage boys are more interested in television. Thosthali kuttan, an 11 year-old Toda boy, who lives in Nathanari Mund, owns neither a radio nor a television set. He goes to his neighbor's house, to watch television. He said:

We don't have radio or television. I go to my neighbor's house to watch television. I watch drama and films on television.

Since it is not always feasible for Toda boys to visit whenever they want to, the exposure to electronic media is very limited. Considering the limited availability of radio and television amongst Toda settlements, the Toda children still listen to radio in their neighbor's house. The distance between one house to another also determines the way children use the media in their everyday lives. Often, in Toda and Kannikaran settlements, the dwellings are not closely co - located, unlike Kota settlements, where the dwellings are located in close proximity to each other. Consequently it is hard for the Toda and Kannikaran children to listen to radio broadcasts in their neighborhood while they stay within their own houses. Conversely, the Kota children could listen to radio broadcasts which come from neighboring houses, because the Kota houses are located close to one another. Interestingly, the access to radio by the children of Toda Christian families is limited on the weekends because these children go to churches located in Ooty town. They also spend some of their spare time during weekends listening to Christian radio broadcasts and Christian songs from tape recorders. Mothers who follow Christianity also restrict their children's viewing of television. A 12-year-old Toda boy, Prathees Kuttan, said:

My parents don't allow me to watch television. We are Christians, so we should not watch television.

Mohan Raj, an 11-year-old boy, from Nari Kuzhi mund said:

My parents don't allow me to watch television because my father converted to Christianity. My mother was also baptized, so she doesn't allow me to watch television.

A 12-year-old Toda boy, Satheesh Kumar, from Nari kuzhi Mund, who is studying in a Tribal school said:

On Sundays and Saturday we don't watch much television because we are Christians and we go to church along with my mother.

This type of media use is entirely different from Christians in the plains because the transport system is better and the people have better access to the Churches.

While answering a question as to who listens to more radio and watches television in his household, Satheesh Kumar replied quickly 'we don't have radio so we don't listen to radio, we don't watch television also'. Similarly, cable/satellite television exposure is also very limited amongst Toda and Kannikaran children. Most of the Toda children said they did not have access to cable television in their settlements, whereas surprisingly, Kannikaran children in the Kanyakumari district were unaware of its existence and have never heard of regional Tamil satellite channels such as Sun TV, Raj TV and so on.

I did not have to explain about cable and satellite television to the tribal children in the Nilgiris, whereas among Kannikaran children were completely unaware of Sun TV, which elsewhere is a very popular and well-known television channel in Tamil Nadu. Children who come from the Kannikaran community are secluded from the mainstream mediascape, which has a direct influence on their media use, in both radio and television. Children in households who have radio at least, listened to entertainment program occasionally, two or three times in a week. Importantly, the non-availability of a radio set at home, denied children the opportunity to listen to

their own traditional tribal music and songs programs on ORS, which are very popular amongst the adults. An 11 year- old Toda girl from Koi mund said, ' we don't have radio at home so we don't listen to radio'. In contrast a 10-year-old Toda girl from Apar mund who has a radio at home told me that she listens to tribal songs from ORS everyday. Ownership of a radio set helps these tribal children to be very close to their own tribal culture. ORS is the first radio station to broadcast tribal cultural songs 'malai aruvi' in Tamil Nadu and all tribal communities in the Nilgiri hills irrespective of their age listen to this program. In this way, ORS really helps children to learn and be close to their culture and custom. It does not mean they have no access to their culture without ORS. Radio stations are a channel of communication and empowerment to these communities.

An 11-year-old Toda girl, who does not have radio or television, who lives in a settlement close to Ooty town, does not listen to tribal songs or any other entertainment programs like film songs or drama. On the other hand, she chooses to visit a neighbor's house that has a television set, to watch film-based entertainment programs.

This is interesting, because the location of a settlement, also determines what type of exposure children have to media. In this case, since this settlement is located near Ooty town, where they have access to television sets, the children have an option of viewing television programs, whereas the remote settlement children do not have easy access to television. Although in a few remote settlements, children walk a long way to another settlement who have television sets, the frequency of viewing television is understandably limited. Vannila, a 10-year- old Toda girl, from the Kuruthukkuli Toda settlement, is studying in primary five. She does not have a radio set at home, and listens to the radio at her neighbors' house. Although she goes to Attakor mund to watch film -based programs and drama on television, she likes radio and listens to songs, drama and news.

Children visit families other than their own communities to listen to radio. Tamil people from the plain work on Toda land and also live in Toda settlements near the fields. Toda children go to Tamil peoples' houses as well to listen to radio. A six-year-old Toda girl, Banu Priya, said she goes to

her Tamil neighbor's house to listen to radio. Children go to their neighbor's house just to listen and at other times their purpose is just to visit their relatives and they will incidentally use that opportunity to listen to radio programs. An 11-year-old boy from Kadi mund, who is at primary school, does not have radio at home. He visits his uncle's place and listens to radio. The following extracts describe this pattern:

Researcher: Do you have radio at home?

Toda Boy: No.

Researcher: Do you listen to radio?

Toda Boy: Yes

Researcher: Where do you listen?

Toda Boy: At my chithappa's [uncle's] place

Researcher: At what time do you go there?

Toda Boy: I don't go to their house in the morning.

Researcher: When do you go and listen?

Toda Boy: I go there to play, when I am there I listen to radio drama.

Here radio listening can be considered as a secondary activity (see, McQuail, 1997, p.47) because the main purpose of his visit is to play and while he plays, he listens to the radio. This response is similar to the way adults listen to agricultural radio programs. Their main purpose in owning a radio set is to listen to radio news. However, while they mainly listen to news and entertainment programs, they will also listen to agricultural programs (Jayaprakash, 2000). The main point here is that children consider radio-listening a main activity, like playing with their friends. A 12-year-old boy from Nathanari mund, who is a student at Neerkatimund tribal school, goes to his auntie's place in Garden Mund to listen to songs on radio. He also watches 'Oliyum Oliyum' a film songs program on television.

Children whose family own only radio

Obviously children who only have access to the radio at home, use radio more than any other medium. They listen to the radio in the morning and evening and tune to various radio stations. Surprisingly, the Tribal songs do not attract them, but these programs were widely listened to by the teenagers and the men and women of tribal audiences. Instead the children tuned to regional radio stations, such as Chennai, Coimbatore, and Tiruchirappalli for radio dramas and film songs. As far as radio listening is concerned, it is clear that adults spend a lot of time listening to radio for news, film songs and agricultural programs. Most of the children interviewed also felt that their fathers are fond of agricultural programs on radio. Those children who only had a radio set at home rarely watched television, and only when they visited their relatives at town mounds. When they go to their relative's house they mainly prefer to watch film songs and feature films on television. The Toda and Kota parents feel that excessive viewing of television will affect their children's education. Hence, parents control their children's viewing to avoid excessive television.

McQuail (1997, p.21) argues that:

[Audience] research has been guided by the notion that media use may in itself be problematic for society as well as for the individual concerned. "Excessive" media use has been viewed as harmful and unhealthy (especially for children), leading to addiction, dissociation from reality, reduced social contacts, and diversion from education.

This view is certainly endorsed by the tribal audiences of South India. Thavasi, a 12 year-old Kota girl from Sholur kokkal, has only a radio at home. She said:

My father doesn't allow me to watch television, he says 'you are studying why do you want to watch television?

While talking about the entertaining factor of radio listening, Thavasi said:

On tape recorder you will be listening to same songs again and again but on radio you are not sure what song they are going to play next and that itself gives a new kind of experience. They also broadcast latest songs.

When compared to the Toda children, the Kota children have better access to television, because a limited number of houses have cable/satellite television. Although an 11-year-old Kota boy, Angara Kambattan, has only radio at home, he said, 'I go to my neighbors house to watch television'. Seeniji, a 12 year-old Kota girl, who mainly listens to radio, said:

My mother likes radio I like television. Since there are pictures on television news, I watch television news.

Toda children who have access to only radio at home said, 'no one has got television in our settlement so I don't get to watch television'. Children in this category also realized the importance of radio, especially during power failures.

Figure: 8



Portable radio and tribal children in the remote settlements

Kokila, A 10-year-old Toda girl, who lives in Apar Mund, rarely watches television because she said she does not have a television at home.

She is a regular radio listener and tunes into a major regional radio station of AIR, Tiruchirappalli for radio drama. She said:

We have radio at home; I tune Tiruchirappalli radio station, on Thursdays at 8 pm to listen to radio drama. I use radio more than any other medium and I listen mainly to radio drama.

When I asked her 'do you watch television?'

she said:

I don't watch television at all. I don't go to neighbor's house, because I have to study. On rare occasions when we go to my uncle's place, [at a different settlement] we watch television.

Increasingly, children hesitate to visit their neighbors' houses to watch television, giving priority to their schoolwork. Whilst visiting the houses of close relatives, especially during school holidays, the children tended to stay indoors for a few days to watch television. Devi Sree, a 12-year-old Toda girl, studying primary six in the tribal school, listened to the radio in the morning and evening. She tuned to ORS in the evening and listened to film songs. She also listened to radio drama. Devi Sree said:

We have radio, but I don't listen to tribal songs. I listen to radio drama and news. Mostly, I listen to film songs on Sundays. However, I use radio more than any other medium.

Tribal song programs on ORS are not very popular amongst the children. Though ORS encourages adults and youth to participate in the cultural programs, such as *malai aruvi*, children did not seem to participate in these programs. Again, children's programs are very limited on ORS, hence are not popular amongst children. Whilst talking about the other members of the family, Devisree added that her father also listens to radio and concentrates on agricultural programs and news. Regarding television viewing, she said:

We don't watch television at all, we don't have television at home. I can't watch television programs (Doordarshan) or other cable television like Raj TV, Sun TV, because, no one has got television in our village [emphasis added]

Moses is a 12 year-old Toda boy from Muthunadu mund whose father works in a bank at Coonnor, a small town, his mother is a housewife. He has two sisters. There are five members in his family. His father switches on the radio set in the morning at about 7.15 and listens to news and film songs until 8 am. This Toda boy said:

At eight O clock in the morning I switch off the radio and go to school, during day time I will be in the school, and in the evening I tune to the radio between 7.30 and 8.30 pm and I listen to radio drama. I enjoy listening to radio drama. Between 8.45 pm and 9 pm I listen to film songs. Then I go to my 'Periyamma's' [Aunty] place to watch television. So I listen to radio in my house and [watch] television at my periyammas place. I watch drama, songs, cricket, tennis, volleyball and sport on television (emphasis added).

Although young tribal audiences listen to cricket commentaries on radio (see below), they also watch sporting events on television for its visual impact. Lines (2000, p.676), based on her case study with twenty-five young people, in the U.K., argued that 'media sport provided an important channel for emotional release. Its very character of physicality, unpredictability, suspense and links with the nation, celebrities and teams affords key elements of audience identification and intensity'. The majority of the young audiences in my study watch various sports programs such as football, tennis, and cricket. Teenage boys expressed interest in listening to live cricket commentaries on radio (see below).

Children also observed that their mothers who follow Christianity restrict other members of the family from listening to film songs. Moses, from the Muthunadu settlement, watches television because this mund is one of the most prominent settlements of the Todas, having a power supply and proper road facilities. Every year the Toda people from all the settlements come to celebrate their cultural festival. This settlement has few television households. I asked Moses, when he switched on the radio at home his parents object?

Moses: No, when my father switches on the radio set, my mother yells at him.

Researcher: Why?

Toda Boy: My mother is a Christian, therefore she does not like it.

Among the Toda Christians, as discussed in the 'gender' chapter, radio listening is largely confined to informative and Christian programs. Nevertheless, the majority of the children enjoy film songs on radio. A 10-year-old Toda boy who is studying primary four in the Ooty town HPF (Hindustan Photo Limited) school, lives in 'Thalapatheri mund' which does not have a power supply. He said he has a radio set at home and tunes into the radio at 6.45 am and mainly listens to film songs. His father, who is an agricultural laborer, switches on the radio set in the morning. All the family members listen to the radio. His three elder sisters, their two children and his parents listen to radio together as a family. The boy listens to radio only in the evening because he has to go to school in the morning. In the evening he tunes to the ORS and listens to songs and drama. He narrated the whole story-line of a drama that was broadcast on the previous day. The drama was broadcast for the occasion of Independence Day. The boy had narrated the story very well.

Researcher: Who listened to this drama?

Toda Boy: Akka, [the two elder sisters], appa, [the father], amma [the mother] myself, and all of us.

Researcher: How often do you listen to this type of drama?

Toda Boy: Every Saturday. [With lot of interest and curiosity he said] "today we have a drama [*Olichithram*] between 3.30 and 4.30 pm.

It was very obvious from this boy's response that radio really mattered to him and entertained him and his family in the absence of television. When I asked him about his television viewing style, it was clear that the Toda children have limited exposure to television and often choose to watch films and film based programs.

Researcher: What do you watch on television?

Toda Boy: I don't watch television at all.

Researcher: Do you go to other houses to watch television?

Toda Boy: My aunty's place is at HPF, it's very near to my school. After school, I go there watch television and come home.

Researcher: Do you watch every day?

Toda Boy: No, once in a week I go there and watch television

Researcher: Do they have Sun TV?

Toda Boy: Yes

Researcher: What are the programs you watch?

Toda Boy: I don't watch any programs, only films.

Christenson et.al (1985, p.335) argues that radio and television satisfy different roles in the lives of children:

Although television may be used to some extent by some children to control mood, the personalised and portable audio media do it better. Similarly, music tends to be the choice of media when children are sad, lonely, or want to temporarily forget about their current situation.

This view is true among the tribal children in the Nilgiri hills. A 10-year-old Toda girl, Samya, was listening to radio in a public open place. It was hot, the sun was bright, but she had a bed sheet for a sunshade, and the radio. When I asked her the reason for her to listen this way, she said,

My mother had gone to my grandmas place, I am all-alone, so I took the radio to the "Mattam"[open space in the settlement] and listening to radio.

Loneliness is one important factor that has increased the amount of radio listening. Brown et al. (1990, p.65) argues, based on a survey conducted among 12 to 14 year-olds from Southeastern U.S. cities, that the presence of parents at home has direct influence on teenagers' media use. 'Lack of access to parents, either because the mother was employed or because no father was in the home, generally increased the time that adolescents spent with radio and television'. Tribal children in Southern India think that radio is a good companion when they are alone at home.

My field notes, observation and interview data reveal that the limited exposure to other mass media like television, cinema (theatres) and newspapers is an important reason for tribal children to rely on radio for information and entertainment. A six-year-old boy, from 'Aduthal Mund' who is studying primary one, said that there were no television households in his mund. When I asked this Toda boy, about his radio listening habits he said:

In the morning I listen to radio news and other programs before my school bus arrives. Then I go to school. My father and mother also listen to radio. I listen to news, songs and drama on radio.

While Toda and Kota children have some exposure to television, the Kannikaran children in Kanyakumari district have little opportunity in accessing this very popular television entertainment. They are unaware of cable/ satellite television and the popular regional television channels like Sun TV. An eight year- old Kannikaran boy said:

We have a radio at home. My father tunes the radio. I like film songs. I never go to the theatre to watch movies. I have not seen newspapers. I have had opportunities to watch television and video during the temple festival seasons. I don't know about Sun TV or cable television.

Many responses like this show us that amongst Kannikaran children, radio is popular.

Children whose family own both radio and television

Children who had both radio and television sets at home, said they use more television than radio. My observation of media use in the field revealed that they used both radio and television. Although television's visual impact attracted children, ORS and its community – based radio programs induced tribal families to keep abreast with what was happening by listening to radio. Since ORS broadcasts radio programs that are highly relevant to the tribal audiences of this region, radio is still in use amongst television-owning households as well. Children from this category mainly listen to the radio and prefer mostly film songs and drama. They largely tune into the radio in the morning, in the evening they mostly watch television. On television they watch feature films, drama, serials, other film-based entertainment programs and sport. A 12-year-old Toda boy who lives near Ooty town, who has both a radio and a television said:

I rarely listen to radio. Whenever, my grandma and her friends present programs in AIR [All India Radio] Ooty I tune to ORS. Otherwise I only listen to film songs on Ooty radio in the evening. In the morning I tune to Coimbatore radio [AIR] at 7 am and listen until 8.30 am, I listen to film songs. Every Friday there is a comedy program called "Sringamma siringa", in Coimbatore radio, comprises of jokes, I listen to this program from 7 am to 7.30 am.

Although he said he rarely listens to radio, the way he explained the program timing of different radio stations clearly showed that he did listen to radio regularly. He remembered the program titles and the schedules. One important factor that motivates children to tune to ORS is the participation of their own community. This Toda boy tuned into the radio when his family members participated in radio programs. In the same manner, many audience members tend to tune into ORS when the people from their settlement also participated in the programs. Whilst talking about news programs, he said that he would watch news on television (Tamil news) at 8.30 PM. Before that, in the evening, he listens to film songs on Ooty radio between 5.30 and 6 pm. Then he would study for a while and watch television after dinner.

He set aside time for radio listening as well as television viewing and the radio was still in use even though they have owned a television set for the past two years. During an interview with a 12- year-old boy, Ratheesh Singh, he was listening to film songs on Ooty radio. Singh's household has owned a radio and television set for the past twelve years. He mainly watches television at home. However, he said that he would tune to Ooty radio for film songs and listen to programs related to their community, *Malai Aruvi*, a tribal song program and radio news. Singh does not consciously tune to *Malai Aruvi*, but when the family and community at large tune to this program, children in the settlements also listen to this popular program. When asked about using the radio at home Singh said:

We do not move our radio set at home, instead we increase the volume. Wherever we are in the house it is audible. We keep the volume really high.

I asked if he would switch the radio off once the film songs were over. He said, 'No', and pointed to the other members of the family saying 'they would continue listening to radio'. Radio listening in a family has been selective as well as non-selective. When a radio set is on in a household, it does not mean that all members of that family listen to the program. Some may show interest whereas some may not show any interest at all. However, there are some program formats such as drama and film songs programs, where the whole family listens at the same time. There were instances where a family sat together to listen to radio dramas. McQuail (1997, p.65) argues that:

Since many households share the same receiver for several or many channels, there is always a large traffic moving in and out of any particular program or channel audience. Advertisers and planners need to know as much as possible about these movements on a more or less continuous basis.

Regarding participation in radio programs, Ratheesh Singh informed me that he had not participated in the Ooty programs. Nevertheless, other members of this Toda settlement had participated in producing and presenting Ooty radio programs.

Although children from both radio and television households listen to radio it is clear that children largely watch television. An eleven-year-old Toda boy Sinyal Kuttan, who lives in Thamadu mund, has access to radio and television at home. There were twelve houses in this settlement, which is a relatively high number when compared to the other smaller Toda settlements. Some of the remote Toda settlements have only four to six houses. This is one of the reasons why these settlements were not connected to electricity and cable television. Two houses in this settlement had television and I selected them to see how they used radio in their everyday lives, especially the children. All twelve houses had radio at home. Sinyal Kuttan lives at his grandma's place, his native mund is 'Kavakkadu mund' which is located about ten km from Ooty town. He listens to radio occasionally. When it comes to television, he watches cinema, drama and serials. On Fridays he watches '*Oliyum Oliyum*' (film songs from the Tamil cinema). On Sundays he watches '*Sakthimaan*' (a children's serial), '*Jai Anuman*' (a mythological serial), and football. When I asked him how often the other members of his family listened to radio, he said they mainly use the radio for news and secondly for drama. In his family they tune into all the radio stations. When one station ends their broadcast they tune into other stations.

However, there are instances where children enjoyed both radio and television at home. There are only two houses in 'Pagal Kodu' mund, but this settlement has a power supply. I interviewed a 12-year-old boy, who is studying seventh standard, in Tamil medium. They have access to Onida black and white television and radio at home. He said he switches the radio on during holidays and listens to radio news, film songs and radio dramas. On television he watches Tamil films on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. He also watches Tamil news on Doordarshan at 8.30 p.m. He also has limited exposure to cable television, when he visits his aunt's place, near Ooty town at HPF [Hindustan Photo Limited]. He goes there on a weekly basis to watch cable television. He said he loves listening to Tamil film songs on the radio. He also listens to Ooty radio for drama at night.

Shyamari Kuttan is an eleven year-old boy, who lives in a Toda settlement called 'Attakormund'. This mund has electricity and there are three Toda houses in this settlement. He has a television set at home. Shyamari Kuttan informed me in an interview that he watched television only in the evening for dramas or serials after 7 p.m., but emphasized that on Sundays he tunes into the radio at 3 p.m. for '*olichithiram*' (film stories and dialogue). Radio drama is invariably popular, not only among tribal children, but also among adults. However, children who come from families who have television tend to opt for television drama and serials. Victoria Mathl, a 12 year-old Kota girl from Tiruchikadi settlement, said:

At night I watch television between 7 and 8 pm. I love to watch dramas and songs on television. On radio I listen to songs, film songs that's all.

Radio is used in the morning and during noon- time, whereas the evening is considered television time. Women and children largely sit together to watch and enjoy television serials and popular film-based entertainment programs.

Researcher: Do you watch children's programs?

Toda Boy: Yes, I watch '*Kanmani Poonga*' [children's program] on television.

While the radio has children's programs every Sunday from AIR Chennai, the children's programs on regional and low-power radio stations are in the infancy stage. However, radio has the support of parents and teachers in schools as this exchange shows:

Researcher: When you have television, why do you listen to radio?

Toda Boy: My parents ask us to listen, so we listen.

Researcher: Why do they ask you to listen?

Toda Boy: They tell us not to watch television, but we watch television without their knowledge. They don't object if we listen to radio.

Children whose family own only television

It is rare to find households who have only television sets in Toda settlements. However, since tribal families own television sets, sometimes they fail to maintain their radio sets at home. Hence, children from these households mainly watch television and ignore radio.

A seven year-old boy from Kandhal mund or Karsh mund [in Toda language] said '*I watch English news in the morning from DD*'. His uncle [mama] is a central bank employee and they have a black and white television set at home. Everyday he wakes up at 6 am and has rice for breakfast. He also prays to Jesus in the morning as they are Toda Christians. They do not have a cable subscription and have access only to Doordarshan. He watches DD serials such as "*Sakthimaan*", *Jai Anuman* and *Sri Krishna* with elders in the family. *Sakthimaan* is a very popular television serial in India. Its main target audience is children. In the evening he watches television (DD) between 7 pm and 10 pm and does his homework.

It is clear from the interviews that those households who own television sets tend to ignore radio, this is especially true of the children in these households. This is similar to households that own neither radio nor television sets, because they go to their neighboring houses to watch television. If they cannot access television in their own settlement, they may occasionally watch it when visiting relatives. Awasthi, an eleven-year-old Kota girl does not have radio at her home, but she has a television set, as well as access to cable/satellite television. She watches film-based entertainment programs on Sun TV, Raj TV and so on. While talking about radio listening habits she simply said, '*we don't listen to radio*'. Many responses like this show that television entertains and informs them, so children who own only television sets do not bother with the radio and its programs.

Teen Age Listening

Teenage Boys

Cricket is a very popular game in India and young tribal audiences tune to AIR for cricket commentaries. Radio has a role in popularizing the game of cricket in rural India. Appadurai (1995, p.34) argues that

Through radios, which are very widely available and which attract large crowds in train stations, cafeterias, and other public places, Indians have absorbed the English terminology of cricket, especially its noun structure, into a variety of vernacular syntactic structures. This type of sports pidgin is crucial to the indigenization of the sport for it permits contact with an arcane form at the same time as the form is linguistically domesticated. Thus, the elementary vocabulary of cricket terms in English is widely known throughout India (increasingly even in villages).

Tribal teenage boys are increasingly aware of cricketing terms such as LBW (Leg Before Wicket), innings defeat, pavilion, yorker, bouncer and so on. Listening to cricket commentaries on radio helped them to improve their cricketing vocabulary. A 17 year-old Toda boy from Kandhal mund, has radio and television at home. He tunes to Coimbatore and Ooty radio regularly. While answering a question on why about he listens to radio, he said, '

I like to listen to radio programs such as news, sports news on Saturdays and Sundays. I am a cricket fan and therefore I listen to cricket commentaries. I tune into Coimbatore radio for these programs.

An 18 year-old Kota boy had both cable television and radio at home. For him, listening to the latest cricket scores was one of the main reasons for him tuning into the radio news. Radio news gives updated information on cricket very quickly and frequently in the bulletins. Kiruba, a 17 year-old Kota boy from the Tiruchikadi village, has a radio at home. He does not have television at home. He bought the radio mainly for the cricket commentary during a Madras (now Chennai) test match, because whenever India play test matches here AIR broadcasts a live commentary in Tamil. Appadurai argued that 'multilingual radio commentary is probably the single most

important instrument in the socialization of the Indian mass audience into the subtleties of the sport' (Appadurai, 1995, p.34).

Other than cricket and news, teenage boys listen to radio for entertainment and film songs. Apart from tuning into ORS in the evening for film songs, they also tune into regional radio stations such as Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai and Tuticorin for film songs. Teenage boys particularly those who have dropped out from school, and who have the responsibility for taking care of their buffaloes, use radio for entertainment. They tune into radio mostly for film songs. Mandiskuttan, a 16 year-old, is one such a boy who does not have television at home, but has a radio. He looks after the buffaloes in the morning between 6 am and 7 am and also in the evening at about 6 'o clock. He tunes into Tuticorin radio station between 1 pm and 1.30 pm for film songs. Then he listens to film songs at 6 pm to 6.30 pm by tuning into ORS.

These types of patterns show that radio is used for different purposes by different age groups. I have argued elsewhere (Jayaprakash, 2000), that radio is mainly used by audiences for news and informative programs, such as agricultural programs. But the teenage boys use the radio mainly for cricket commentaries and the Toda boys in particular listen to film songs.

During group discussions teenage Kota boys were divided in their opinions as to whether they think radio is important to them or not. A Kota boy, Ramesh from Sholurur Kokkal, does not have a television set or a tape recorder at home, however, he has a radio at home. He does not have electricity at home and used batteries to listen to radio. He goes to his neighbor's house to watch Sun TV.

While talking about the importance of radio, he said that they definitely need a radio because they do not have tape recorder or electricity at home and therefore do not have any other media for entertainment. Radio is very important to them. He listens to the radio for songs and news. On Monday he tunes into Coimbatore at 8 pm to listen to drama. He tunes in to ORS and listens to drama and news. While talking about the ORS he said that he listens to '*Malai aruvi*' and gave importance to this program because the

villages that are located near his village speak different languages (Toda, Kurumba, Badaga and Irula). Listening to these programs helps him to communicate with them. Since he has a radio at home, he uses radio more than the television.

Mahesh, a 16 year-old Kota boy, who has neither a television or radio at home, disagreed with Ramesh and claims that television informs and entertains. He goes to his neighbor's house to watch the DD news and other programs. While answering a question on how important the radio is to him, he said, 'We do not need radio. We watch DD news. We can use a tape recorder to listen to film songs'. Similarly, a 17 year-old Kota boy, who has cable television at home, expressed a similar view, that he is happy with Sun TV and did not think radio is as important.

Ramesh pointed out the problems involved in visiting his neighbors to watch television. He said that he does not use television much, because neighbors sometimes have guests, it would be "disturbing" to them. So he does not go there too often. Occasionally when they show certain films on television he does go to their house. Subramanyam also brought out some of the problems or constraints involved in viewing television in their neighborhood. He said 'I don't want to disturb them. My parents also say not to disturb them'.

Bellam, a 15 year-old Kota boy, does not have a television set at home. He had a radio set and a tape recorder at home. He goes to his neighbor's house to watch cable television, mainly Sun TV. He prefers the Kota cultural songs on ORS. On the problems of going to neighbor's house to watch television, he says that the neighbors do not switch on their television set when his favorite program is being broadcast. His father also did not endorse his visiting their neighbor's house to watch television.

Rajasekaran, a 19 year-old Kannikaran boy, has a radio and tape recorder. He has a radio with an FM band so that he can receive the local FM radio located at Nagercoil. He has to leave the house at 7.45 am for work so he does not normally listen to radio in the morning. He returns from

work around 4.30 pm and turns on the radio at 5 pm and listens until 7.30 pm. He cultivates pepper, tapioca and rubber.

Teenage Girls

McQuail (1997, p.22) argues that, 'in principle, active audiences provide more feedback for media communicators, and the relationship between senders and receivers is more interactive'. When it comes to radio-listening amongst teenagers, girls are more active listeners than boys. They write letters to the radio stations and express their opinions on programs. A 19 year-old Toda girl, Bama, from Thuval kodu Mund, who is on the verge of completing her BA in Economics tunes into the radio. She mainly listens to radio, more than watching television. Bama has one younger sister and her parents are agricultural laborers. Bama tunes into ORS and listens to many programs related to tribal audiences. She says, 'we listen to all the programs on ORS from 6 pm to 9.30 pm including agricultural programs'. Bama also tunes into Coimbatore radio and listen to *Vazhkal Malar* (a feature program on life matters and its problems). She also listens to the children's program '*Mazhalalyar poonga*' on Sunday at 3. pm on Coimbatore radio.

While answering a question on 'what comes to mind when thinking about the radio', she said, 'It helps us to use its information'. When elaborating on this, she said she had encountered a problem with a local bus conductor who was unnecessarily talking to her and all the passengers very rudely. This incident happened when she was on her way to do her exams, and all the passengers were upset by the unruly behavior of the conductor. Bama and her sister wrote a letter to Coimbatore radio for the program '*Vazhkal malar*' and the issue was discussed on air by the station. Bama and her sister told me that whenever they encountered problems in their life, they wrote to Coimbatore radio, because ORS did not have programs on receiving grievances from listeners. Being a part of AIR, ORS officials do not want to get involved in any controversies and the officials are happier with broadcasting cultural programs. However, Bama and her sister write letters to the ORS feedback program '*Karuthumadal*' in which listeners comment about the programs on ORS. The station director replies and comments on

the letters. This pattern of media use shows that the teenage girls are very 'active audiences' of radio messages.

Bama also uses radio for Christian broadcasts. She says, 'in the morning if we want to hear 'messages' (Christian messages from the Holy Bible), we can listen on radio'. They follow Christianity and their parents object if they listen to film songs on radio.

Researcher: *do you listen to songs?*

Bama: *No, We don't listen to songs*

Researcher: *Why?*

Bama: *We don't listen*

Researcher: *You don't listen to film songs?*

Bama: *We don't listen to film songs.*

Researcher: *Why is it because you are Christian?*

Bama: *[Smiles] yes.*

Researcher: *Before you become Christian?*

Bama: *Earlier, we used to listen.. Now we listen to only news.*

Similarly, other Toda girls, such as Ramani and Brenda Malli, listen to a well-known Christian program in the Nilgiris called *Aathmeegayathirai* (holy journey). However, my interview data revealed that teenage Toda girls (although sometimes they claimed they ignore film songs) are not restricting themselves to film songs as explained by the Toda women in the gender chapter.

Girls also share their radio sets with their neighbors and friends. Kavitha, a 15 year-old Kota girl, has only a radio at home. Very uniquely, Kavitha, and her sister share the radio set with the neighbors and friends.

Figure: 9



Kavitha, a Toda girl sharing her portable radio with her friend

She says, 'I take my radio set to my neighbor's house and listen to songs along with my friends. Some days I take [the radio] and some days my sisters take it to our neighbor's house'.

Girls tune to the regional radio stations and overseas stations for the various programs and they appreciate ORS for its locally produced cultural programs. They also value tribal audience participation and presentation of cultural programs. Ramani, a teenage girl from Muthunadu mund, has completed her 12th standard (equivalent to A level) and is now waiting for admission into a teacher training college. Ramani says ORS has been useful to her because she felt it provided a platform for the tribal community to participate and present programs such as *malai aruvi* and *yengal Giramam*. According to her, she is from a Toda community and did not know about the other tribal communities like 'kurumba' and their cultural songs. Although she has not presented programs on ORS she values her aunt's participation and her Toda community from various Toda settlements.

Brenda Mally, an eighteen-year-old Toda girl educated to sixth standard (Primary Six), has a radio set at home, and during this interview was listening to a Sri Lanka radio broadcast. While her settlement has

electricity, her house does not have a power supply. In the evening she tunes to the Ooty radio station and listens to *Malai Aruvi*, the tribal songs program. While answering a question on whether ORS has been useful to her, she said, 'yes it is useful because they broadcast 'malai aruvi'.

Although Revathi, an 18 year-old Kota girl, has both a radio and terrestrial television at home, she is an active radio listener. Revathi's village does not have cable television but has access to Doordarshan, which does not have full time Tamil programming during the daytime in this region. She also listens to *yengai giramam* (our village) program, a field-based program, where the program is produced in a tribal settlement. Archana, a fourteen-year-old Kota girl, has both a radio and a television at home. She often tunes to Coimbatore and listens to songs but she does not listen to agricultural programs. On ORS she says, since they broadcast Kota songs regularly, she tunes only to that program. She adds that since they 'say' something about their own community she listens to that program.

Contrary to the above analysis, teenage girls from the Kota community who have cable television at home, tend to ignore radio news and prefer to watch Sun TV Tamil news at 8 pm. Vasuki, a 14 year- old Kota girl, has cable television at home, but she does not have a radio at home. Since her father is a central bank employee, they can afford to have a color television at home. She watches almost exclusively films and mythological serials on Sun television. In short, girls who have cable television at home often ignore radio.

Conclusion

The observation and analysis of interviews and focus groups amongst young audiences reveal that radio is widely preferred by young audiences, though children in television households tend to ignore radio. Children who only have access to radio at home use more radio than any other medium. Teenage girls seem to be more active listeners of radio programs. They write letters to the radio stations and express their feedback on programs. Boys, apart from sports and informative programs, are more inclined towards

television and visiting their neighboring households and settlements to watch television. Christianity has led to less exposure of entertainment programs both on radio and television. Since children are not given much opportunity to participate in the cultural programs of ORS, programs such as *malai aruvi* and *yengal giramam* are not very popular among children. Parents control their children's television viewing for a better education. Kota children who own only radio at home have the opportunity to visit their neighbor's house to watch television. In contrast, children from Toda and Kannikaran settlements are often deprived of television sets, so do not get to watch television, hence radio is the main source of information and entertainment.

CHAPTER 7

THE SPATIAL DIMENSION OF RADIO LISTENING

[E]arly radio was involved in 'capturing time and space' in everyday life. Its position in the private sphere, both as a technological object and as a provider of program services, went through a transformation over these two decades. From being an 'unruly guest' in the living room, the radio became – symbolically at least – a 'good companion' to household members (Moore, 1990, p.116).

Introduction

This chapter primarily discusses how both male and female members of tribal communities listen to radio in the differing contexts of the domestic (private) and the public spheres. I will then examine the changing place of radio in contemporary tribal societies. Radio audiences among tribal communities in Southern India have limited exposure to media, such as television, cinema, newspapers and magazines. It is thus important to look at radio in the context of other mass media, and the two spheres of life; private and public. Morley and Silverstone (1990, p.31) have argued that:

[T]elevision should now be seen, not in isolation, but as one of a number of information and communication technologies, occupying domestic time and space alongside the video-recorder, the computer and the telephone, as well as the walkman, the answering-machine, the stereo and the radio.

Similarly, I argue that radio listening cannot be studied in isolation because tribal audiences very often compare their radio-listening with television-viewing, hence it is difficult to avoid television's presence and its impact on tribal audiences. In tribal settlements, people often negotiate their time between radio and television, especially since the widespread

introduction of satellite and cable services in India have now penetrated the most remote regions. Radio audiences also watch television and use other media, such as cinema and the newspapers. In other words, 'overlapping' of media audiences (McQuail, 1997, p.50), cannot be avoided in social settings. It is also important to study the normal everyday lifestyle of the tribal people, to see how tribal audiences use their time to listen to radio. This is mainly because media use of indigenous communities in India has often been ignored in the past, as the program-planning of AIR has often been based on a mainstream, urban population. It is therefore critical to know how and why tribal audiences use radio at a particular time of the day.

My individual and group interviews, as well as participant observations of the audiences from different settlements, revealed that radio is largely used during the day and that people watch television as a group mainly at nighttime, usually after 7 p.m. It is interesting to note that this difference in using radio and television coincides with the findings of Hobson's research (Hobson, 1980) in which she argued that, 'the radio for the most part, is listened to during the day while they are [housewives] engaged in domestic labour, housework and child care'. It is interesting that radio consumption patterns are so alike in such radically different cultural settings. However, my work, apart from exploring how women listen to radio while performing their household activities, also looks at consumption of radio by family groups, in respect to their indigenous private and public sphere.

Johnson (1981, p.12) argues that, 'radio as a cultural technology was conceived as a one way transmitter directed at the individual in the private home; its potential for community participation, or even the possibilities for its consumption in a community context were ignored'. As radio programs are consumed in domestic settings or households, as well as influenced by the local environments, it is important to study radio use in the context of private sphere. While discussing the private or domestic sphere, Morley and Silverstone (1990, p.33) argued that:

Households, families, are bounded conflictual, contradictory. They have their own histories, their own lore, their own myths, their own secrets. They, and the individuals who compose

them, are more or less open, more or less closed to outside influences (...).

It is important to study media use in both public and private spheres, because 'the nature and quality of 'leisure time' in the private sphere is determined by the structure of our 'time commitments' in the public sphere' (Morley & Silverstone, 1990, p.42). I will show the consumption of radio programs and the different modes of listening which are occurring in both private and public spheres of contemporary tribal societies. In the tribal context, the private sphere comprises the household and its immediate environment and includes the kitchen, the bedrooms and other open places in settlements that people consider to be their immediate domain. Potts (1989, p.5) argues that:

Radio has created numerous new spaces. The large radio sets sold in the 1930s and 1940s transformed families' living room into listening- rooms. The ornate radio sets became the focus of the family's aural space as well as of its living-space. (...) It was now a movable aural space.

The media helps to define these spaces and the differences and similarities between these two spaces of the private and public sphere, will be discussed. I will show how radio is being incorporated into the contemporary everyday lifestyles of tribal societies in Southern India. In tribal settlements parents are concerned about their children's education and schoolwork. They think that radio listening might distract their children from their schoolwork. Thus, they choose their radio listening, particularly the space where they listen to radio, as well as the time they tune into the radio in their everyday lives. Moores (1988, p.27), when discussing the memories of early radio and its arrival into domestic sphere, argued that:

[R]adio was inserted into a historically social space which organised its occupants in specific ways. The interior space of the working-class home provided frameworks for certain activities, encoded an ideology of domesticity and established the identity of the family group.

As (Bryce, 1987), has discussed, broadcast time and family time are intermeshed. Johnson (1981, p.167) has argued that 'capturing time and

space in the home, it [radio] timetabled family activities and challenged domestic rituals'. Broadcasters generally broadcast their programs at a time, which was convenient to audience family time. Hence, how the tribal audiences organize the schedule of their everyday lives and their radio listening is part of this chapter. I will show that different types of audiences listen to different types of programs at different times. Scannell (1995) argues that studying the listening habits of audiences is an important aspect of program planning. From the audience's interpretation, I will show the changing character of tribal consumption of radio in 'interior space'.

Radio Listening and Domestic Sphere

My mother listens to radio while she cooks in the kitchen, we move it to our bedroom when we go to bed (Rajan, twelve-year-old Kota boy from Sholurur Kokkal).

Morley and Silverstone (1990) argued that it is important to include the 'domestic context' and 'audience activities' when studying media use in everyday life. While emphasizing the importance of studying the household as a major unit of consumption in the domestic sphere, they insist that it is important to look at the internal dynamics of a household and its media consumption. This is important because households are influential factors in determining the different modes of media use in the domestic sphere. 'Indeed it can be argued that households and families construct their technologies in different ways, creating private meanings (redefining public ones) in their positioning patterns of use and display' (p. 35). Morley and Silverstone have argued that it is important to look at the complex nature of the domestic setting, as well as the audience's involvement with the medium. Hobson's *Crossroads* study also suggested that media use has to be viewed within the context of 'routine duties and responsibilities of household management' (Moore, 1990). Similarly, Scannell (1989, p.150) argues that 'broadcasting had to learn how to adjust its programs to chime in with the day-to-day life and routines of the population'.

Both my casual conversations and unstructured interviews showed that tribal women use radio in different places of their settlements such as the kitchen, in the open space and in the field, while carrying on with their routine duties and responsibilities. McQuail (1997, p.52) argued that 'we can also look at spatial influences in terms of precisely where media are actually used in a micro perspective: in which room of a house or outside space? As media multiply and diversify, this micro perspective becomes more important'. Women initially cook in the morning hours, then engage in handicraft work throughout the day. However, their listening takes place mostly during the day because they prefer to perform their domestic duties and responsibilities while listening to film songs and drama on radio. Thus they enjoy these programs as an accompaniment to their daytime domestic chores. Hobson mainly argued that women listen to daytime radio to avoid the isolation and loneliness experienced in the domestic sphere. Although this reason is similar in the domestic sphere of tribal settlements in South India, the tribal women listen to the radio as an inclusive family activity. In the family all members listen to varied radio program genres which include film songs and drama. An 18 year-old Kota girl who has television at home told me that:

While I work in the kitchen I keep the radio set in the kitchen and listen. When we all sit and eat here [in the kitchen] we listen to radio as well. All other times my mother mostly listens to radio in the kitchen.

This type of individual and family listening is possible generally because broadcasting is simultaneously addressed towards individuals and family groups. Moores (1988, p.33) argues that broadcasting discourses had their role in constructing family audience, because broadcasting stations 'addressed members of the family group, both individually and collectively'.

In the morning hours, especially between 6 am and 10 am, tribal women perform their household domestic activities and listen to the radio in the kitchen. The location of radio listening is significant, because it explains the importance of the mobility of this medium, which enhances the closeness between the medium and the audiences, which helps them to use radio according to their everyday lifestyle. For example, women use radio in the

kitchen while they perform their household activities during the daytime, shifting it to their bedroom at nighttime. Johnson (1981, p.169) when discussing the early radio in Australia wrote:

In the shift from physical presence to constant companion, radio became a full member of the household. It now went beyond the realm of an entertainer to become a new dimension in daily life. It focussed the family by being something to stay home for and it accompanied, and provided orchestration for, already existing rituals of daily life.

Tribal women informed me that, although they were involved in a variety of activities from domestic chores to handicraft work, they listened to the radio and this pattern of listening helped them to get through their tasks in a more cheerful way where they also felt more connected. They reported that women were used to listening to the radio while they worked and that they could concentrate on these two functions at the same time. Kiruba, a 17-year-old Kota boy said:

In the morning I switch on the radio and my mother, sister who work in the kitchen also listen to radio when I tune the radio.

Kiruba shares the radio with his family. He realizes that his mother and sister, whilst working in the kitchen, also like to listen to the radio with him. Potts (1989, p.2) argues that 'while we can see only in front of us, we can hear all around; our range of hearing helps to define the domestic situation as private space. The control of sound is the control of space'. When I asked a 40- year-old Kota woman, Mathi, from Kollimalai village, why she keeps her radio in the kitchen, she gave me an interesting answer:

It is very convenient to listen to songs, stories and all other programs when I keep it in the Kitchen. If I keep it in some other room our children are studying, so it will disturb our children. So I keep it near the 'Aduppu' [fire stove] and keep the volume really very very low and listen to radio all alone. While our children eat in the Kitchen they sit here [in the kitchen] and we all listen to radio.

Women are concerned about the effects of radio listening and how it could disturb the educational progress of their school-aged children. Hence,

they keep their radio and television sets at home very consciously. Women in television households often stick to radio during day because, as an aural medium, it is not reliant on the fixed visual concentration of the audience, it is a much more appropriate accompaniment to the performance of domestic chores. Balaraman, a Kota man who listens to the radio generally for film songs and news, told me that his wife listens to the radio while she works in the kitchen. Although Udhayakumar, aged 34, and his wife Uma, aged 26, who live in Tiruchikadi village have cable television at home, Uma listens to film songs while she cooks in the kitchen. This pattern of media use clearly shows that while some women have the opportunity to watch cable television during the day, they generally prefer to tune into the radio and listen to film songs. One of the reasons for them listening to the radio, is its portability, which allows for mobility around the home.

They can move around in households to perform domestic activities. However, this pattern of radio use does not suggest that women always listen to radio while they perform domestic work. They also tune into the radio when they are relaxing. Scannell (1989, p.150) argues that 'most people most of the time, no matter what their class, education, age or gender, tended to treat the radio as a cheerful noise in the background, as a companionable and sociable domestic resource'. Muthulakshmi, aged 35 asserts that she listens to the radio when she is free and that the radio helps her to relax at home. However, as far as the women in this study were concerned, the kitchen was the place where they most preferred to listen to radio. While answering a question on relevance of radio and its usage in the kitchen amongst the women of her village, Maathi replied:

Radio is most important for us [women] when we work in the kitchen. We can't always sit, take rest and watch television. So in our village radio is most important for us.

Radio is listened to as a 'family medium', members of the family are attracted to it and they listen to this medium as a group. Also, the same radio set can be used by an individual member of a family at a given time and passed onto other members of the family when that person has to go away from home or temporarily chooses to perform other tasks or activities, such

as looking after the buffaloes. The flexibility of radio is a positive attraction of the medium for tribal audiences. They have learnt to use radio in accordance with their daily routines. Raja, a 30-year-old Toda man from Muthunadu mund, told me that people who have transistor radio mostly carry their radio sets into the fields, especially during Saturdays and Sundays to listen to film songs and drama while at work in the fields. Since he has a radio that works on electricity, he says he is unable to move his radio out of his house to listen. He looks after his own buffaloes for an additional income, apart from concentrating on agriculture. He listens to the radio before he goes out to take care of his buffaloes and once he returns from work he tunes into the radio for news and entertainment programs. He is up at about 6 o' clock in the morning and listens to 'paamalai', a devotional song program on Coimbatore radio, and listens until 6.30 am. Then he listens to regional Tamil news ('Maanila Seidhigal') at 6.45 am. After listening to this news broadcast, he goes out to look after the buffaloes. If he doesn't have to go out, then he listens to the radio until 9.30 am. His routine of agriculture work ('thotta vela') starts at 9.30 am and he would be in the field until 12.30 pm. Between 12.30 and 1.30 pm, he goes home for lunch. In the afternoon again he goes to work and returns home at about 5 pm. He turns on the radio again at about 5.30 pm in the evening to listen to film songs. He said:

Then I go out to extract milk ('Paal Karakka') and will get rest only at about 7 pm.

A 43- year-old Toda man from Nathanari mund, said:

I switch on the radio in the morning at about 6 and listen to radio until 7, then I go out to look after the buffaloes while my wife continues to listen to radio.

Pothali kuttan, aged, 44 from Kandhal mund, provides a very good example. Pothali Kuttan, when considering the irrelevancy of television programs to the hill audiences and illiterate audiences, says comparatively, radio would be a more useful and better medium. He has a television set at home and at night neighbors of all age groups come to his house to watch television. While members of his family and neighbors watch television in the

hall [living room], at about 9.00 pm he takes his transistor radio to his bedroom and listens. He keeps his radio there until 8.30 am the next morning. He does this mainly because he listens to the Tamil news on AIR Coimbatore at 6.45 am and at 7.15 a.m. In the same manner, Kiruba, a 17-year-old Kota boy, told me that he listens to the English news at 6 am and to the Tamil news at 6.45 am and 7.15 am by tuning into the Coimbatore radio station. He keeps the radio by his bed and listens to film songs before he sleeps. He said:

I mainly listen to radio when I am in bed and mostly listen to news and songs.

Figure: 10



Individual Listening: A Kota man listening to radio in his bedroom

Elderly men find solace in listening to radio, often it is individual, but 'active listening'. A 22-year-old Kota man, who has both radio and television, says his father, who is retired from the postal service, listens to the transistor radio very often, when in bed. They have a 'two-in-one' set (both tape recorder and radio together), that is placed on a cupboard shelf and is used by everyone in the family, except his father, who prefers to use the transistor radio when he is in his bedroom. Similarly, Thiyagarajan, a 25-year-old Kota man from Kundha Kothagiri, told me that his father, who is 62- years old,

listens to the radio every day, and keeps his radio always on his bed. Men generally tune into the radio in the morning for news (irrespective of whether they have a television at home or not), and in the evening (those who have only a radio). They also tune into entertainment programs like film songs and drama.

It is interesting to mention here, that when Moores (1988, p.26) discussed the radio's entry into the living room he said that:

The acceptance of the radio into the living room – that area of interior space designated to the unity of the family group – was not immediate. Far from being a focus of family unity, the radio's point of entry was marked by a disturbance of everyday lives and family relationships (see also, Johnson, 1981).

On the other hand, young people prefer some light listening and often tune into a film songs program. Sekar, a 25- year-old Kota man from Sholurur Kokkal (Kotas have better access to television than any other tribal community selected for this study), who is an agricultural laborer, participating in a focus group discussion, said he would listen to a film song program on the radio every day before going to bed. Similarly, many children I spoke to, also told me that they took their transistor radios to bed at night. In this way the radio belongs to, informs, and entertains, different individuals within a family, at different points in time.

It is interesting to look at the radio audiences' awareness of the different program schedules between different radio stations. Prema, a married Kannikaran woman, works as an agricultural laborer and has only a radio at home. She tunes into the radio as early as 5.30 am in the morning and tunes to the Tuticorin radio station to listen to the news. If she does not find any laboring work to do on a particular day she tunes into the radio at 7 am and then tunes to Sri Lanka ['Colombo'] radio station, mainly for film songs in Tamil, listening until 10 am. She also tunes to Tirunelveli, the radio station of AIR, to listen to drama programs as well. Although she is not well versed in the Malayalam language, she tunes into the Trivandrum radio station of AIR to listen to a Malayalam film song program. Prema learnt about the polio drop-administering scheme for children in her area through an

announcement that was aired from Chennai AIR. She complains that the Nagercoil radio station is not audible in her area. She often listens to the very popular spoken word programs of AIR Chennai, 'Inru oru thagaval', presented everyday in the morning by Mr. Then Katchi Ko Swaminathan, who became a very popular radio personality after the success of this program. Prema says that everyday before she goes to bed she listens to the commercial broadcast 'Vividh bharati' channel, to listen to the film song programs.

Radio Listening and the Public Sphere

Patel and Ekpere (1978, p.83) have argued that:

Radio is increasingly becoming a more powerful source for entertaining and informing rural people in developing countries. It is equally effective with literates and non-literates. Now that transistor receivers are widely available, radio communication can be received even where there is no electricity in remote rural areas.

My interactions with both men and women, young and old, tribal and non-tribal people, have shown that radio is also used in the public sphere, as well as in the domestic sphere. Audience responses revealed that there are many reasons for this practice. Firstly, as Patel and Ekpere have discussed, transistor receivers with batteries enhance radio use in settlements who have no access to electricity. One of the wider conceptions amongst tribal women, is that radio is an amiable medium that they can enjoy during the daytime whilst most of their family members are away from home. However, its mobility dependent on whether they use transistor radios with batteries, or two-in-ones that largely function using electricity. In other words, the households that use transistor radio sets with batteries often moved their radio sets in and out of the house. Poornarai, a 46-year-old Kota woman, a mother of two, who is semi-literate, educated up to fourth standard (Year 4), from Sholurur Kokkal, added that since her radio set functions using electricity, she is unable to carry it to the fields (*'thottam'*).

Apart from poverty, power supply is still a hindrance to media access in the hill areas of Ooty and Pechiparai. Those who have a power supply also keep batteries in their radio sets so that they can listen to the radio when there is a power failure. A 34-year-old illiterate agricultural laborer, from a remote settlement which does not have a power supply uses batteries to listen to radio. He uses four batteries, which cost approximately forty-two Indian Rupees, which he says lasts approximately two months. Although it is not very economical for him and the many other audience members who earn between Rupees eighty to hundred a day (they may not get this income every day, for example, when it rains they cant work), he says radio is an important source of information. Many settlements, especially in the Toda and Kannikaran communities are deprived of electricity. The small portable radio receivers are very convenient for tribal communities, they often use them in the field, neighbors or/and relatives houses and the public open places of their settlements.

Although audiences from different settlements, communities, genders, and age groups, gave different reasons for this pattern of radio use in their everyday lives, the conclusion that emerges from the analysis, is that radio is shared even more in the public sphere than it is in the domestic sphere. The willingness to share their radio sets with neighbors, relatives, friends, and even among people from non-tribal communities, is a unique practice, which is not a common amongst the mainstream population of Tamil Nadu. Scannell (1995, p.16) argues that:

It is not simply that broadcasters, in attending to their audiences, must consider how they address them. They must connect such concerns with considerations of behaviors that are appropriate to the settings and circumstances in which listening and viewing take place.

Audience behavior and their everyday circumstances and settings in which listening takes place are important aspects of audience research (Gupta, 1984.; Mody, 1991, 1992), and tribal audiences' of both Nilgiris and Pechiparai hills provide a useful insight on radio use (see below). Todas often live in settlements, which are in close proximity to their fields. Tamils and other migrant populations from the plain lands also come to the Toda

munds to find work, usually living far away from the tribal settlements. When they come to the field to work along with the tribal people they ask their tribal friends to bring their radio sets from their houses as well. In this way migrant agricultural laborers and tribal audiences can listen jointly to the radio in the field. A Toda man whom I met in his field said:

When we come to the field ('thottam') we bring radio to the field other wise we will feel lonely and it will be boring.

They listen to drama, film songs, weather reports and agricultural programs in the field. Similarly, Tamils also carry their radio sets into the field and listen with their tribal friends who work alongside them in the field. A 34- year-old Toda man, Sairaj, from Nathanari mund, does not have a radio at home, but when he goes to the field ('thottam') to work, he listens to radio. He pointed out:

Tamils (the migrant population from the plain lands of Tamil Nadu) who work with us in the field bring radio and we listen to songs and drama.

Audiences also brought out many issues on why radio is popularly used in outdoors. A 28- year-old Toda woman, Shanthi who is educated up to 10th standard (year 10) comes from Kandhal mund, which is located near the Ooty town. Her parents are agriculturist. While emphasizing the importance of transistor radio during power failures she added that, Todas in particular, 'when it is not raining' take their transistor radio sets into the field. Thillathukuttan, from Kandhal mund, said Todas are comparatively new to agriculture and their interest in learning agricultural practices is the main reason for them using radio in the different places of their settlements and fields. Moses, a 12- year-old Kota boy from Muthunadu mund, argued that ORS's innovative program production in different settlements of tribal audiences is the main reason for audiences using radio in the settlements. He mentioned the '*Yengai giramam*' (Our village) program and said that children, young people and the elderly, are encouraged to participate in these programs and those who participated often sit together in the open space ('*Mattam*') of their settlements and listen to these broadcasts when the

programs are on air. Audiences from different settlements agreed that a transistor radio is widely carried to the field. Potheeskuttan, a 35-year-old Toda man, who is an agriculturist from Pagalkodu mund, has both radio and television at home. While discussing the pattern of people carrying their transistor radio sets to the field, he said:

Even I carry my radio to the field and listen to radio while I work in the field. It is very interesting to listen to radio and work.

He added that generally, people near his mund ('pagal kodu'), largely carry their radio sets on Sunday afternoons, because AIR broadcasts a one-hour program of dramas and film songs. Apart from men, women are also interested in listening to the radio when they go into the field. Balasubramanyam, a male aged 22, from the Tiruchikadi village said his mother, who is fond of radio listening, carries her radio to the field ('thottam') and listens to film songs and drama. Maristy, a 16-year-old Toda girl from Thalapatheri mund, said she had seen people near her settlement listening to radio programs while they worked in the field. Neela [female aged 30] and Akilan [male aged 30], both from the Tiruchikadi village, admitted that they have seen people listening to radio programs in the field while working. Kannan, a 24-year-old Kota man from Kollimalai village, works for a courier company based in Kothagiri. He takes his transistor radio to the field, 'many times', where he occasionally works. In his observation, he said that the tribal audiences mainly carry radio sets into the fields for information. Poomarai, a 46-year-old Kota woman from Sholurur Kokkal, argued that people carry their radio sets to the fields provided they own a radio that can run on batteries. She added that 'our radio works on electricity and thus stays at home'. Although Kota audiences have access to television, radio is still a multifarious medium that can be used outside the house, in their settlements and in the fields. Kannan further added:

Both radio and TV are useful but with radio when we go to thottam (fields), we can carry it for as a time pass and also get information and news.

In Sholur Kokkal (one of the Kota villages), though the village has electricity, there are also households without a power supply, as it is expensive to get a connection. A 15- year-old Kota tribal school female student from such a household in Sholur Kokkal, carries her transistor radio to her neighbor's house to listen to the radio along with her friends. Those who do not own a radio also go to their relatives' houses to listen to their favorite programs. Chandran, a 43- year-old Kota man from Tiruchikadi village, who does not own a radio or television, goes to his brother's house to listen to the radio. The Todas, the Kotas (from the Nilgiri hills) and the Kannikaran audiences (from the Kanyakumari district), also carry their radio sets to the fields. The Kannikaran are tribal people living in a hilly forest area and very often wild animals destroy their crops at night. Hence, men go to their land at night to sleep there to protect their crops. During this time, they carry their transistor radio sets to listen to film songs and the news.

These examples, I would argue, show that through the use of radio, tribal people have learnt to demarcate space in quite revealing ways. The division between female and male spaces reproduces clearly existing social practices. However, the creation of family space suggests that earlier patterns of spatial organization are being transformed.

Everyday Life, Time and the Radio Listening

Moore (1988, p.36) argued in the context of the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) that:

The imagined daily routine of the mother provided the basis for the broadcasters' programming plans. If radios were to weave its way into the rhythms of the domestic sphere it would have to take account of who was listening and at what times. As the constant occupant of the home, the mother's activities were a barometer for the changing shape of the audience throughout the day.

Women from tribal communities often experience difficulties in adjusting to the programming schedule of AIR, which is particularly relevant to programs for women. It is very interesting to note that illiterate women, who are unable to read the time from their clock, listen to AIR to be informed

about the time. AIR regularly informs its listeners of the time of day and generally women feel that they do not need to look at the wall clock to know the time. Moores (1988, p.38) argued that 'Radio was to bring the precise measurement of time into the home. It was engaged in the domestication of standard national time'. Similarly Johnson (1981) in the context of early radio in Australia argued that:

Time was no longer to be guessed at, but repeatedly told and accurately told. Not only were listeners' lives structured according to notions of a time for work and a time for leisure; but now their work and leisure were to be structured similarly, according to regulated time slots (Johnson, 1988, pp.170-171).

While women are occupied with their domestic obligations, they like to be entertained by radio, at the same time they like to know the time. Poomarai (female aged 46) pointed out that:

It is always good to know the time on radio while listening to radio in the kitchen.

Hobson (1980, p.106) who based on her research amongst housewives in U.K., has argued that 'the constant reference to time during the programs on Radio 1 also helps to structure the time sequences of the work which women perform while they listen to the radio'. Moores (1988, p.23) (1988) argues that:

Broadcasting is a taken-for-granted part of everyday life. Radio and television sets are an unobtrusive presence in the geography of domestic space. Programme schedules are intricately woven into the fabric of our routine daily activities. Broadcasting would seem to occupy a 'natural' position in the private sphere.

In the low power radio stations ORS and NRS, the content of the programs varies each day but the formats are unchanged. Programs such as '*yengal giramam*', '*malai aruvi*' use the same signature tunes and are broadcast at the same time everyday. This organized pattern of programming helps audiences to tune, identify and recognize their favorite programs during their busy domestic schedules.

Radio in the morning

Scannell (1995, p.9) has argued that, 'the speciality of programs comes more clearly into focus when we ask not what is a program, but who is the program for?' This is a key question considered by broadcasters when they plan programs for their audiences. Hence, it is crucial for broadcasters to know at what time people wake up in the morning and listen to the radio because they schedule programs based on the convenience of the listeners. Scannell, further emphasized that 'it was the broadcasters who must measure up to the expectations of their audiences, rather than requiring audiences to measure up to their expectations'(p.10). Similarly, Ganesan (1998), program executive of AIR Ooty, argued that radio should reach audiences to involve them in participating in programs, rather than wait for them to contact AIR officials. Mody (1991, p.45) argues that it is essential to know 'who needs to know what, in which form, at what time, through which channel?' Mody suggests that in order to achieve actions by the audience, it is crucial to broadcast messages at an appropriate time relevant to their lifestyle. In order to achieve this Mody insists that the pre-production visits to the audiences' community is important so that mistakes in production can be avoided due to the complex nature of audiences in different areas. Mody pointed out that both senders and receivers are important in the construction of meaning and both must participate in a dialogue. A pre production visit will also help us to know the existing knowledge of the community in the specific topic. For a successful development communication program, Mody emphasizes that it is important to give importance to the program format, simplicity of the contents, media habits and information needs of the target audiences. Mody added that pre testing the message is crucial to modifying the program before the final production.

My observations and interviews show that the reasons for their being more radio-listening in the morning, than in the evening, are manifold. Audiences like to be informed of weather reports and news in the morning before they go out to work. The Nilgiris climatic conditions are unique in a sense, as it has different and unpredictable weather conditions compared to

the plain lands of Tamil Nadu. Audience research on this aspect has not been done amongst the hill audiences of this region. Since the policy makers and the government felt that it would be more convenient and suitable for the hill audiences to listen to radio broadcasts in the evening, a morning broadcast has not been planned and ORS has only evening programs. In contrast, I have argued elsewhere (Jayaprakash & Shoesmith, 1999) that the hill audiences prefer to listen to radio mainly in the morning.

Audiences from the hill region think that regional radio stations provide 'more detailed information' on various programs such as agricultural programs. Although these farm programs from the regional radio stations are often irrelevant to the farming conditions of hill areas, the people like to be informed of agricultural practices that are used on the plains. It is also important to note that after work when they reach home very late in the evening they are unable to listen to agricultural programs broadcast from the low power radio stations of ORS and NRS.

Again, radio listeners also watch television. The regional private satellite televisions such as Sun TV, Raj TV, Vijay TV and JJ TV, attract large audiences (particularly from the Kota community) in the evening, with their entertainment-oriented programs, with audiences preferring to watch television programs more than radio. Since AIR has two Tamil news bulletins in the morning, one being the national news at 7.15 am, the regional news at 6.45 am, audiences tend to tune into the radio in the morning. Tribal women who follow Christianity tune into overseas radio such as FEBA, in the morning as early as 5.30 am to listen to Christian songs and programs. Audiences also think that television viewing is 'time consuming' and requires more concentration than radio listening. Particularly, they feel that television viewing in the morning would affect their work and their children's education. They consider radio listening to be an easy activity, which will not affect their everyday schedules.

A 68-year-old Toda woman wakes up as early as six in the morning to prepare coffee for the family. Although her settlement (Karsh or Kandhal mund) is located near the Ooty town, with generally better access to newspapers, but being illiterate, she listens to the radio news in the morning

to keep abreast of current affairs. Her participation with ORS programs also motivates her to listen to radio programs. Among other Toda women from her settlement, she has been to the ORS studios on two occasions and sang Toda songs. Although her radio set at home is under repair and not in working condition, she visits her neighbors' houses in the morning to listen to film songs and news until 9 am. She listens to Coimbatore radio in the afternoon between 4 and 5 pm. They had a black and white television set at home until their son took it away after his marriage, leaving the elderly couple with only a transistor radio. The important point here is that the tribal women's participation in the ORS program also encourages them to tune into ORS. However, women also complain that ORS does not have a morning broadcast, hence they tune into various other regional radio stations of AIR. Krishnaveni, a 33-year-old Kota woman from the Kollimalai village, tunes into Coimbatore radio in the morning to listen to devotional songs. She likes to listen to devotional songs in the morning and complains that ORS does not have a morning broadcast.

Other women also gave their reasons on why they prefer to listen to radio in the morning. Karunyamma, a 48-year-old agricultural laborer, from the same village (Kollimalai), apart from listening to 'Paamalai' (devotional songs) said, 'weather reports and news are also important to listen to in the morning'. She tunes to Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli in the morning to listen to agricultural programs and feels that these stations broadcast 'more and detailed' information on agriculture. Tribal children I had spoken to (who had participated in the focus group discussions, invariably) said their parents mostly tuned into the radio in the morning, to listen to devotional songs, news and agricultural programs.

Figure: 11



Toda children participating in a group discussion

A 12-year-old girl, Seeneeeji said that her parents, tune radio in the morning to listen to devotional songs’.

Hobson’s (1980, p.105) women respondents (housewives) also mentioned they tuned into their radio set early in the morning and she observed:

In some cases switching on the radio is part of the routine of beginning the day; it is, in fact, the first boundary in the working day. In terms of the ‘structurelessness’ of the experience of housework, the time boundaries provided by radio are important in the women’s own division of their time.

Tribal audiences emphasized that it is important for the radio stations to broadcast programs at suitable times to its listeners. Shanthi, a 28-year-old Toda woman, said:

Whatever may be the program they broadcast... as long as it is scheduled in the morning we would listen to radio

Shanthi also complained that the non-availability of a morning broadcast on ORS forced them to tune into the other regional radio stations such as Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Chennai. Although audiences

invariably tuned into the radio in the morning, they watched television programs at night. Hobson (1980, p.109) argued that television programs in the evening, or at night, are selected more consciously than radio programs during the day. She pointed out that:

This must partly be a consequence of the fact that they [women] have more freedom during the evenings, and they can make active choices because they are no longer subject to constant interruptions caused by their responsibility for domestic labour and child care. This is in contrast to the radio during the day, when radio programs are selected primarily as 'easy listening', a background while they do their housework or look after the children.

Toda women, especially the elderly, have different styles of radio listening. When their grown-up children are around they choose the programs, and change the channel. However, in their absence women felt lonely and tuned to the various radio stations and listened to film songs. Toda women say that their children switch on the radio in the morning at about 5.30 and it would be continuously heard until they go out to work at about 9.30 am. During the daytime, Toda women apart from domestic work, were jointly involved themselves with their traditional handicraft work ('*puthukuli*'), while they performed this, they also listened to the radio.

Figure: 12



Toda women listening to radio while doing embroidery ('*puthukuli*').

Although they tuned to overseas and various other regional radio stations, at 6.45 pm they tuned ORS because they loved to listen to '*malai aruvi*' the tribal songs program presented by the tribal communities such as the Toda, Kota, Kurumba, Irula and Badagas. Women also explained the limitations of big radio sets that work on electricity. Sekar, 25-year-old agricultural laborer, values the agricultural programs but argued that though he listens to radio both in the morning and evening, he uses radio mainly for two purposes: 'In the morning it is for news and at night it is for film songs'.

Audiences are aware of at what time different radio stations broadcast their favorite program. Akilan, aged 30, a Kota man from the Tiruchikadi village tunes to the various radio stations at different times of the day for film songs. Monday is a holiday for the Kotas, and they don't work on that day. He tunes into Sri Lanka radio only on Mondays to listen to film songs between 3 and 6 pm. He tunes into Tuticorin at night at about 8.45 pm for film songs and to Coimbatore in the early evening at 5.30 pm for film songs as well. He also tunes to Madurai and Tiruchirappalli radio occasionally for film songs. To an extent Tamil broadcast on Sri Lanka radio is popular amongst tribal audiences because they broadcast film songs very often and for a longer duration than AIR. A 28-year-old Kota woman from the Kollimalai village, works on a tea estate. She goes to work at about 10 in the morning and returns at 5.30 in the evening. Though she has had a television set at home for the past two years, she tunes into the Sri Lanka radio station in the morning and listens to Tamil film songs. Similarly, Udhayakumar, a 34-year-old Kota man from the Tiruchikadi village, who has cable television at home, said, 'my wife tunes to Sri Lanka everyday in the morning at 7 for film songs'. Like Udhayakumar, most of the men I had spoken to said their wives to listen to Sri Lankan radio in the morning while doing their domestic chores.

Audiences tune to whatever stations they are interested in and are not following any expectation of 'channel loyalty' very seriously. They know at what time, what stations broadcast what programs. Wilson (1999, p.99) argues that, 'a rural listener to a regional station is routinely moved between three or four territorially distinct spaces – local, regional, state or national -

with programs coming from appropriate production centers, each of which operates on its own logic of spatial inclusiveness'. But whatever stations they tune into in the evening, they do tune into ORS at about 6.45 pm to listen to the '*malai aruvi*' program. This is one of the major and important programs that has created some kind of attachment between tribal audiences and ORS. A 30-year-old Kota woman, Neela, from the Tiruchikadi village commented that the reception of ORS was good in the Kollimalai settlement. When she lived there, she used to listen to '*malai aruvi*' and the other programs of ORS. But when she moved to the Tiruchikadi village she realized that the reception quality was not very good, so she stopped listening to that program. This is a good example of how the radio listening differs between settlements, not only due to the varied interests of audiences, but also due to the reception quality. She also tunes to Colmbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Sri Lanka radio for news, agriculture, women's programs and film songs, where the reception is of a better quality.

Amongst tribal households, tuning a radio set is a routine activity in the morning. A 22-year-old Kota man, Balasubramanyam, from the Tiruchikadi village says:

My mother, sister and I use radio regularly. They would switch on the radio in the morning but when they forget I do it.

Although there are Tamil news bulletins on television, radio is preferred for its more frequent Tamil news bulletins. A 17-year-old high school student told me that after 9.30 pm he watches programs on television, but everyday, in the morning, he tunes the radio in and listens for at least an hour. He mainly listens to radio for sport, news, and film songs. Sabrish, an 11-year-old Toda boy, studying in the fifth standard from Garden mund, has a color television at home, but still listens to the radio for film songs in the morning.

Why Radio in the Morning?

Raja believes strongly in listening to agricultural programs and adopts the practical instructions from these programs. He applies the instructions

and information when he works in the fields. Hence, he does not miss the agricultural program (*'Thottamum Thozhilum'*) broadcast after the Tamil news from 7.25 pm to 8 pm. He proudly says:

If we learn to cultivate then we need not give our land for lease (*'kanthayam'*). If we don't give our land for *'kanthayam'* and cultivate on our own, the money that we get from *'kanthayam'* at the end of one year can be earned within three months.

Raja further argued that some people may not be able to listen to agricultural programs in the evening, so they need to broadcast the agricultural program, both in the morning and evening. This schedule would also help audiences to plan their listening according to their lifestyle. When dealing with complex issues, Mody (1991) suggests *'repetition'* and *'recapitulation'* as a remedy. Regarding the audience segmentation, Mody, argues that the important issues are media literacy and media exposure. According to Mody,

Development communication planners need to ask questions such as: Which medium is the right one to reach people who cannot read? Which people own working transistor radios with batteries? Which people can afford the price of a movie ticket and bus fare to the movie theatre in the city?' (p.163).

A 30-year-old Kota woman, who is an agricultural laborer and a mother of three, only has radio at home. She says:

We come home very late in the evening because of our work and I listen to radio only in the morning until 7 am when I listen to agricultural program and all other programs including news.

Jeyamisse, the first woman postgraduate from the Toda community, tunes into the radio in the morning at about 6 am and continues to listen to the radio until 10 am. She works in the kitchen and listens to the radio continuously. During this time she listens to literary programs such as *'Kural Neri'* and *'Gandhi Anjali'*. While talking about radio and the times she listens, she said:

My father definitely listens to radio in the morning...usually in the evening we watch television but in the morning it is always radio.

Like Jeyamisse, Bama too, listens to the 'Vazhkal Malar' program in the morning, which deals with the listeners' everyday problems. One reason for them preferring radio in the morning, is the major Tamil news broadcast from AIR regional radio stations. The national news in Tamil is relayed at 7.15 am from New Delhi and the regional news at 6.45 am from Chennai. After listening to the national news broadcast in Tamil, men mainly tune into the Coimbatore or Tiruchirappalli radio stations to listen to the agricultural broadcasts. It is interesting to learn that audiences from this region mainly listen to Christian songs and programs that are broadcast from overseas radio stations, as early as 5.30 in the morning. Christian missionaries in Tamil Nadu have media centers there in Tamil Nadu and have overseas transmissions. Other broadcasters interested in broadcasting Christian programs who experience difficulties in infrastructure, such as transmitters, pay a fee to overseas radio stations and their programs are beamed to India. These Christian broadcasts are in Tamil and in a few other South Indian languages, such as Malayalam and Kannada. Local addresses in Tamil Nadu are announced for easy correspondence. One such program is called 'Aathmeegayathira', which is widely listened to by audiences. One of my main Toda informants, Thillathukuttan, told me that his father listens to this program everyday in the morning at about 5.45 am. Bama, a teenage Toda girl, told me that her family tune into radio early in the morning, because they can listen to Christian 'messages'. While answering a question on 'what programs do you expect in the morning when you switch on the radio?' A 20-year-old Toda woman from Thalapatheri mund said:

'Sathyam' [messages from the Holy Bible] about Jesus. they broadcast at 5.30 am from Tiruchirappalli

Tribal men mainly tune into the radio in the morning for news. Muthicane, a 75-year-old Toda leader, told me that he mainly tunes into the radio in the morning to listen to news and added that if he came to know about any important news, he informs his wife and sons. Pothalikuttan from

Kandhal mund told me that he wakes up at about 5.30 in the morning and mainly listens to the Tamil news on the radio. He keeps the radio in his bedroom and tunes to it in time. He added that one of the problems in tuning to other regional radio stations for news in the morning is that the reception quality of news broadcasts from these stations is very often not clear. However, audiences felt that if ORS relayed news broadcasts in the morning, the reception quality would be good. While many recommended that ORS should commence morning broadcasts they also insisted that a local news bulletin covering the Nilgiris region would be very useful for the less literate and poorer audiences who cannot read printed materials or afford to own a television set.

Pothalikuttan's settlement, Kandhal mund, has an electric power supply, and people there have access to television sets. When I asked whether this exposure to television has had any impact on listening to radio, he said:

I own a television set for the past eight years but still I listen to radio news and other programs. There would not be any interest to see television programs in the morning because to watch television we need to sit in front of the television set as viewing requires our presence unlike listening to radio news and other programs.

However, he also said exposure to television had had some impact on radio listening, especially radio drama. As he said, 'we used to listen to radio drama more often but after the arrival of 'Doordarshan serials' have reduced our listening to radio drama'. He then pointed out that when children and women from other neighborhoods come to his house to watch television, he takes his transistor radio to his room and listens to ORS, which broadcasts programs that provide useful information to hill audiences. Supporting preferences of audiences listening to morning transmission, Pothalikuttan aged 44, said that they would be at home in the morning to listen to the news, but in the evening they may not reach home in time from work, so are not able to listen to their favorite radio programs.

Audiences also said: 'devotional songs and '*supraphatham*' in the morning will be nice to hear as well'. A 30- year-old Toda man, from

Muthunadu mund, said, 'I wake up 6 o'clock in the morning and listen to 'paamalai' [devotional songs]'. The focus groups I conducted in the Kota settlements, also revealed that the Kotas feel 'devotional songs are very important' for the morning schedule of ORS. Sivan, a 28-year-old Kota man from the Tiruchikadi village, starts his day at about 5.30 in the morning, by tuning into the Tuticorin station and listening to 'Bakthi paadaigal' (devotional songs). Then he listens to news, film songs and other programs before he switches off his radio at about 9.30 in the morning and goes to work.

Although television is preferred in some of the Kota settlements, radio is still widely used. Balasubramanyam, a 33-year-old Kota man from the Tiruchikadi village admits that radio listening has declined in his household since the arrival of the cable television connection. He still tunes into the radio in the morning at 6 am to listen to devotional songs. He commented that with the arrival of the television set at home, radio listening has decreased in the evening and at night. Arguing that radio listening in the morning is more pleasant than watching a television program, Pothees kuttan put his argument this way:

In the morning, people get ready for their work, prepare their children to go to school and everyone will be busy at home. During this busy time we would like to listen to radio because it helps us to move around and carry on with our work and in the meantime it informs us. But for television we need to sit in one place and concentrate on the television screen and this is not suitable. It is very pleasant to listen to radio in the morning while television is not like that. Watching television in the morning is like a bad omenous ['tharithiram'].

Interestingly, tribal audiences said that the radio informed them of some of the major news stories early in the morning and they then later watched the news on Sun television. Pothees Kuttan said:

Princess Diana's sudden death, Rajiv Gandhi and Indira Gandhi's assassination were all known to us first by radio[emphasis added].

While stressing the nature of their work and media use, the audiences also expressed the sense of difficulty they have in watching television. They

said that agricultural laborers work long hours in the field so they cannot afford to sit in front of the television for a long period. This is one of the reasons why radio is still popular and widely used by the tribal audiences. During my field visits to different settlements where the tribal audiences have access to cable television, I could see the radio sets were either connected to a power supply, or using batteries. At the same time we cannot deny the fact that exposure to cable television does have an impact on radio listening. Radio listening amongst cable television households in the evening, has considerably declined because audiences choose to watch Sun TV news in Tamil at 8.00 pm and other entertainment programs such as drama, Tele - serials and feature films. A 30-year-old Kota man from the Tiruchikadi village said that he used to listen to the radio in the evening and night, but for the past eight months, since he obtained cable television access, he stopped listening to the radio at night.

When I walked along the streets of the tribal settlements, especially the Kota settlements, I could see cable television's domination in the evening and at nighttime, while radio is largely used in the morning for news, agricultural programs and songs. Having said this, radio's advantage, again, is back to the basics: its portability.

Implications

While the Kota children are exposed to cable television, Kannikaran children, in the hill areas of Pechiparai in Kanyakumari district, have access to neither cable television nor Sun TV. An 8-year-old Kannikaran boy, Sudhakaran, from Villusari Malai settlement, does not know about Sun TV or cable television. He only has opportunities to watch video and television during the temple festive seasons. Newspaper reading in the morning is not a feasible alternative source of news and information because only a few tribal settlements have access to newspapers. This is despite the reputation newspapers have in providing better local news than radio or television.

Tribal men from many settlements in the Nilgiris, complained that ORS does not have a morning broadcast and they would like to listen to

agricultural programs and news in the morning. While talking about agricultural programs, a 30-year-old man from 'Muthunadu mund', said that he wakes up at about 6 o' clock in the morning and looks forward to the 6.30 am Tamil 'Maanila Seidhigal' (regional news bulletin). Coimbatore radio, broadcasts agricultural programs after this news bulletin. Similarly, if the ORS broadcast agricultural programs that are produced locally, it would be listened by the local audiences. The audiences make it clear that they would prefer to have agricultural programs produced locally by the ORS in the morning hours. They also feel that the same program could be repeated in the evening because those who have missed the broadcast in the morning hours could listen in the evening, hence not missing any of the important and relevant information. During the morning broadcasts audiences also closely watch the program schedules announced for the day, particularly for dramas, and later listen to the programs at the appropriate time. Audiences felt that it would be a better idea to highlight the important events on that day in the morning broadcasts. Audience responses revealed that tribal audiences switch on their radio sets as early as 5 am and continue to listen until 9.30 am. Simmu Kuttan, an illiterate Toda man from Tharnadumund, regularly listens to all the major regional radio stations of AIR. While talking about ORS, he said that if ORS would broadcast in the morning it would be good. Now they 'open' (start) at 5.30 p.m. and that is why I listen to all the other radio stations. If Octy broadcasts in the morning, we listen to it. Like Simmu Kuttan, many other illiterate Toda audience members mention that they listened to and looked for news broadcasts in the morning and would prefer to have morning broadcasts from ORS.

Members of Illiterate audiences also expressed that they knew at what time AIR broadcast its news bulletin in the morning. Many also differentiated between the national and regional news calling them '*Maanila Seidhigal*' and '*Akashvani Seidhigal*' respectively, as AIR names them. Audiences also felt that the present timing of the morning news bulletins at 6.45 and 7.15 am, is very convenient, though they start their day as early as 5 am. As it has been mentioned, in the chapter on gender, it is mainly the men or boys in the household who switch on the radio in the morning, to listen to the news,

however, the rest of the household is also interested in listening to the news. These morning radio audiences also tune into various other radio stations, listening to a variety of programs, such as film songs, devotional songs, agricultural programs, comedy, drama and spoken word programs, that are all popular amongst the tribal audiences of this region. This is mainly because cable television is not widely available in all the tribal settlements, hence audiences still expect a lot from the radio in the morning, as they are left with no other television programs in the morning hours except on weekends. Like the regional radio stations of AIR, overseas radio stations, such as Sri Lanka, Singapore and Malaysia, are also accessed widely in the morning hours. A 35-year-old man, said that he tuned to Sri Lanka at about 5.30 am in the morning. Among cable TV households in Kota settlements, women preferred to listen to the radio in the morning, whereas men felt 'radio news in the morning is most important'. Muthulakshmi, a 35-year-old Kota woman, gave me a different reason for listening to radio in the morning. She said that her television set was under repair, so she was unable to watch the television news, so she began to listen to the radio again in the morning. She added that she did not get to read newspapers in the morning, so the only option available to her is to turn again to the radio. She also tunes to Coimbatore radio every Saturday morning to listen to radio drama.

Lakshmanan, a 58-year-old Kota man from Tiruchikadi village, who has BA degree in economics, said that he still listens to the radio in the morning, though he has cable television at home. A 40-year-old woman, agreed that her radio listening has been reduced after the arrival of a television set. She said, that her radio is still 'in use' in the morning, between 6 and 9. Even though she has cable television at home, she said her family watch television only after 9 am. Sankaran, a 30-year-old man from the same village, expressed a similar opinion. He said after the arrival of cable television in their home they listen to radio now only in the mornings for devotional songs and news. In the evening they watch television news, but in the morning it is always the radio news. Balasubramanyam, a 22-year-old Kota man from Tiruchikadi village, listens to the radio mainly in the mornings for employment opportunities because he rarely gets to read

newspapers. He also listens to agricultural programs, devotional songs and news in the morning. A 50- year-old Kota woman from this village, said she goes to work at about 9 am and listens to the radio between 6 am and 9 in the morning. She said that agricultural programs, devotional songs, and news are really important in the morning. She does not have television at home, but reiterated that she listens to the radio in the morning, as it is most important to her. She enjoys listening, because she rarely goes to her neighbors' house to watch television. She admitted that there is a temptation to visit her neighbors' house to watch television, because all her neighbors and friends will be watching television programs.

As Kollimalai Kota village does not have satellite television ORS is tuned into in the evening, mainly for *Malai aruvi*. Singaraj Kambattan, a 22-year-old Kota man from Kollimalai village said, listening to radio in the morning is very important: *'once I wake up I must listen to radio'*. He added that he regularly listens to devotional songs and radio news in the morning. Other than news, he tunes into the Tiruchirappalli station to listen to agricultural programs and feels *'they [Tiruchirappalli] broadcast better variety of agricultural programs than those on Coimbatore'*. While Singaraj Kambattan tunes into various regional radio stations in the morning, in the evening he sticks to ORS programs because he likes to listen to their own tribal songs with his mother. While answering a question about what programs he listens to in the morning, he said that he tunes into the radio according to the schedule of radio programs. He knew at what time what programs were scheduled. He tuned in to listen to *'programs of the day'* (*'Nigaizhchi nirai'*) and planned his listening. He tunes into different regional radio stations in the morning for various programs. For example, in the morning he tunes in first to Coimbatore radio for agricultural programs so as to learn about agricultural methods in different parts of the region. He then tunes into Tiruchirappalli to listen to information about paddy fields and coconut farms. Beaman, a 22- year-old man, who works in agriculture, feels differently. He listens to the radio in the morning, mainly for film songs and argues that they already know how to do agriculture, so are not overly concerned with listening to different agricultural methods on the radio.

However, he still felt that news in the morning is important, despite having owned a television for two years. Other than radio, audiences occasionally also use tape recorders to listen to devotional songs and film songs. During a focus group interview, Kamalakkannan, a 26-year-old Kota man, said, 'in the morning I play devotional songs in my tape recorder and then tune radio for listening to news'. When asked about the appropriate time for him to listen to radio, he said that he preferred radio mainly in the morning because there are songs on the radio between 8 and 10 am, with news between 7 and 8 am, so everyone listens.

Kamalakkannan's view is different from most of the other responses because he mentions that his choice of listening in the morning is mainly related to the type of programs broadcast. These being related to agricultural work. However, Kannan Kambattan, during the same focus group interview, refused to agree with Kamalakkannan, seeing that people in his village generally went to the field to work at about 10 am, hence until that time, they listened to the radio. Also in the evening after work they also tune into the radio. His argument is that people listen to the radio in the morning until 10 before they go to work, and then listen again to radio after they come home from work in the evening. Others also expressed the view that people listen to the radio in the morning and evening for different reasons. Venugopal, a 24-year-old Kota man from the Kollimalai village, participating in the same focus group, said that people listen to the radio in the morning for news and film songs, but also definitely listen to the radio in the evening for the agricultural programs. Later, in a conversation I had with him after the focus group, he explained that people tuned into ORS in the evening to listen to agricultural programs and '*malai aruvi*', consisting of Kota songs, so they did not miss listening to the radio in the evening. Venugopal's argument is that since audiences prefer to listen to locally relevant agricultural programs that are appropriate to local conditions they look forward to ORS in the evening. Another important aspect is Kota songs, which are widely appreciated by the Kota audiences and are being broadcast in the evenings, hence families listen to these broadcasts together. Sivan, a 20-year-old Kota man, disagreed with Venugopal, saying that ORS repeated the same programs

very often so it was boring. People listen to the radio in the morning mainly because there are frequent Tamil news bulletins at 6.45 and 7.15 am. Sivan added that people would not return home early enough in the evening to listen to ORS agricultural programs.

Based on this focus group discussion, it is pertinent to note that tribal audiences feel morning broadcasts to be very important to them. They mainly prefer morning broadcasts, feeling that it is the most convenient time to listen to the radio. Since ORS only broadcast in the evenings, the audiences make an effort to listen to ORS, because they broadcast locally relevant agricultural programs as well as culturally relevant programs in the evening. Thettan, a 35-year-old agriculturalist from Sholur Kokkal, mentioned in an interview that although he listens to the radio in the morning, he mainly listens to the radio in the evening because of the ORS programs. Siva Balan, a 21-year-old BA History student from the Ooty Arts College, a participant in another focus group discussion conducted in the Kollimalai village, said that he did not have a television set at home, so he listens to the radio news in the morning and evening.

Archana, a 14-year-old, 9th standard Kota girl from the Kollimalai village, has both radio and television at home. She listens to film songs over the radio only in the morning and does not listen to agricultural programs or news in the morning. In the evening she watches television and does not tune into the radio. The women's program on AIR is scheduled at 1 pm, presuming that women will be free at home during lunchtime. However, as far as tribal women are concerned, those who are working in the field are unable to listen to these broadcasts as they are working in the field at that time. However, women who are at home listen to these women's program. An 18-year-old Kota girl, said that she was not working and being at home she could listen to the radio in the morning, afternoon, evening, as well as listen to the women's program at 1 pm. A 48-year-old woman from Kollimalai village said she listens to agricultural programs and the women's program on the radio, preferring radio to television. She said, When there are no good programs on radio, I watch television.

Audiences in the Nilgiris generally work in the morning from 10 am to 6 pm in the evening. They tune into the radio as early as 5 in the morning, listening continuously until 10 am. In the evening they listen from 6 pm until 11 pm continuously. Audiences felt that these are the two peak times that ORS could utilize to provide an appropriate service to the audiences. However, it is different for the Kannikaran tribal community, who live in the hill areas of Pechiparai in the Kanyakumari district. They cultivate tapioca, rubber, pepper and banana, and when they don't have any work to do on their own land they go to the land of their neighbors or relatives, working as laborers. Raman, a Kannikaran man from the Mothiramalai settlement, wakes up at 4.30 am and sets out for his rubber plantation to extract latex at 5.15 am, returning home only in the evening. Since he has a hectic early schedule, he does not find time to listen to radio in the morning. However, in the evening he tunes into the Madras (Chennai), Tirunelveli or Trivandrum stations. He has an inclination to listen to Agricultural programs detailing the market price of commodities, such as pepper, coconut oil, etc., at 7.00 pm every Wednesday. Similarly, A 38-year-old Kannikaran man, a father of two, from Kunjumalai hamlet, said that he would go to the rubber plantation as early as 4 am and does not find the time to listen to the radio in the morning. Their family tune into the Chennai radio station at 8 pm and listen to radio drama. As their radio does not have an FM band he said, 'we do not listen to Nagercoil at all'. The reach of NRS is still a problem amongst remote communities, mainly due to the limited FM radio sets available. Ganesan (1998) a Program Executive (PEX) of AIR, in an interview with me argued that:

...the local radio stations have not been able to make a very big, dent or headway; the reason being technology. With the local radio stations going FM, the reach has drastically shrunk. With four to five per cent of the population possessing FM receivers, what kind of impact can an FM local radio station hope to make?

Krishnan, 28- year-old Kota man, argues that as he does not have a television at home, like many others in his settlement, he cannot go to his

neighbors house to watch television, whereas he can tune into the radio and listen to the radio news at 6.45 and 7.15 am news in Tamil.

Conclusion

Although radio is preferred in the morning amongst cable television households and settlements, it does not mean that radio is completely irrelevant in the evening. The majority of households and settlements in the Toda and Kanikaran communities do not have terrestrial or satellite television exposure, hence these audiences still use radio in the evening and at night. I have also shown how radio is being incorporated into the contemporary everyday life of tribal societies in Southern India.

Tribal audiences organize the schedule of their everyday life and their radio listening. I have also shown that different types of audiences listen to different types of programs at different times.

Women use radio in the kitchen while they perform their household activities during the daytime, shifting it to their bedroom at nighttime. Women are concerned about radio listening and how it could disturb the educational progress of their school children. Hence, they place their radio and television sets at home very consciously. While women listen to radio when they work in the kitchen, they also feel that the radio helps them to relax at home. In other words the households who use a transistor radio with batteries often move their radio sets in and out of the house. Radio belongs to, informs and entertains, different individuals within a family, at different points in time. They often use them in the field, at neighbors and/ or relatives houses, and in the public open places of their settlements. Radio is carried to the field by both men and women. Since AIR has two Tamil news bulletins in the morning, one as a part of national news at 7.15 am and regional news at 6.45 am, audiences tend to tune into the radio in the morning. Women listen to devotional songs in the morning and complain that ORS does not have a morning broadcast. While many recommended that ORS should commence morning broadcasts, they also insisted that a local news bulletin covering the Nilgiris region would be very useful for the less literate and poorer audiences

who cannot read printed materials or afford to own a television set. The audiences make it clear that they prefer to have agricultural programs produced locally by the ORS in the morning hours. They also feel that the same program could be repeated in the evening, because those who missed the broadcast in the morning hours, could listen in the evening, therefore not missing any important or relevant information. Although morning listening is preferred in the Nilgiris, tribal audiences tune into ORS in the evening to listen to *Malai Aruvi* and *Yengal giramam*.

The responses from many audiences reveal that radio is a large part of their everyday lives, having an important place as a medium of information, as well as entertainment. In focus group interviews conducted with Kota boys in the Sholur Kokkal village, the boys argued for the importance of radio as they have limited access to cable television in this village.

The introduction of radio and television has forced tribal communities to adapt to new time regimes. The division of the day between work and leisure combined with media scheduling creates an increasing sense of belonging to the modern world. In the next chapter I will argue that the struggle between public service broadcasting and commercial broadcasting will have an increasing impact on tribal media consumption.

CHAPTER 8

PUBLIC SERVICE VS COMMERCIAL BROADCASTING

The public service broadcaster also needs to take into account the media needs of the minority audience, whether they be ethnic, religious or linguistic. Such a broadcaster needs to concern itself with developing taste, promoting understanding, spread literacy and development, create informed debate and empower the disadvantaged: major issues that a commercial broadcaster rarely addresses (MIB, 2000, p.9).

Introduction

The rapidly increasing number of foreign satellite television channels, with mainly western programs, as well as the subsequent mushrooming of cable television networks have led to the demands to allow private broadcasting from within India. The Indian Telegraph Act (1885), did not prohibit cable television networks from operating in India, hence CNN began broadcasting in 1990 with coverage of the Gulf War. Cable television networks gradually expanded, challenging the dominance of Doordarshan, the Indian national television broadcaster. The Government of India (GOI) decided to end the broadcasting monopoly of All India Radio and Doordarshan on 9th February 1995. This historic decision was made after the Supreme Court of India, in a landmark decision, said that there was no right to broadcast implied in Article 19 (1) (a), Freedom of Speech and Expression of the Indian Constitution. In order to safeguard national security, the Supreme Court suggested regulation and licensing as a remedy. The Supreme Court also recommended an autonomous broadcasting authority, independent of the Government, to control all aspects of the electronic media.

Realizing this, the Government of India sought to regulate satellite television by enacting a new Broadcasting Bill (1997). According to this Act, all the private television stations are required to uplink from India and not from overseas. Furthermore, they need to apply for a license from the Broadcasting Council based in New Delhi. However, public service broadcasters (PSBs) and news channels like BBC and CNN are exempted from this procedure, so long as they remain a free service to the audience (Cherian, 1996a, 1996b). These legislative changes created a very competitive mediascape, forcing Doordarshan to broadcast mainly film-based entertainment programs in order to attract viewers and maintain the highest possible audience share. Monteiro (1998, p. 162) argues that:

With the growth of cable television and multinational satellite networks in the recent period, Doordarshan has intensified its strategy of going commercial. The change in programming, with more time for future films and entertainment serials ... all these are being seen as inevitable if Doordarshan is to survive the competition from its new challengers.

Until 1997, the electronic media in India was under the direct control of the Government. After a lengthy historic and political struggle for media autonomy (Reeves, 1994; Thomas, 1990), the Prasar Bharati Act, which provides autonomous status to Government owned radio and television services, was enacted in 1990. Some amendments were made in July 1997 and implemented on September 15th, 1997 ("Prasar Bharati Act Effective from Sept.15," 1997). This act aims to support the remote and tribal audiences, who could be better served by radio. The recent 'Report of the Review Committee on the working of Prasar Bharati'(MIB, 2000), instituted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), discussed the implications of the Prasar Bharati as a public service broadcaster, stating:

The problem is [that] commercial broadcasting always compete[s] for the audiences of such programmes. On the other hand, PSB intends to account for the needs of audiences and their requirements. The programmes on PSB should be appealing to the audiences, need-oriented and also achieve audience share (MIB, 2000, p.8).

The review committee of the Prasar Bharati Act, also emphasise the importance of bringing changes to people's lives through the use of programs. The report says, 'the objective of [the] Prasar Bharati is to broadcast meaningful high quality programs, spreading knowledge and education, fostering social change and in catalysing development'(p. 12). The report also suggested that radio and television in India, should have an autonomous status, functioning without any interference from the Government. But how can the Prasar Bharati be an autonomous corporation when it has to depend on Government funding? When radio and television were under the control of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), their expenses were met by the Government. Now, under the Prasar Bharati, it should be made to generate its own revenue to meet all its expenses. 'In the early 1980's although radio and television enjoyed a monopoly, a reduction in the budgetary support and pressure to raise more revenues to fund rapid expansion forced the pace of commercialisation in India'(MIB, 2000, p. 11). The committee also suggests that to increase the revenue the Prasar Bharati need not produce 'mindless' programming but should produce programs that inform, educate and entertain its audiences. As it was difficult to administer and implement, the license fee was abolished in 1985. This option was not acceptable politically. The review committee also recommend against funding through advertisements and sponsorships 'as this model may not correct market deficiencies' (MIB, 2000, p. 24). Until the Prasar Bharati can generate its own revenue, it is going to be dependent on the Government of the day for its funding, which may force radio and television services to function like a Government mouthpiece, for which it has been subject to previous criticisms for many years. In terms of programming, public service broadcasters (PSBs), have had to compete with private broadcasters. Kiran Kamik, CEO of Discovery channel India, said 'PSBs must compete with private broadcasters in producing quality programmes and addressing audiences that have not been reached' (AMIC, 1999, p. 1). Leonard (1993) defining public service broadcasting said:

Public Service Broadcasting is programming transmitted in the interests of the public. It might be educational, or cultural or informational programming. It is programming that provides

some sort of service to the public to help people in their daily lives (p. 31).

Similarly Raboy (1999, p.19) argues that public service broadcasting thrives to empower individuals, social groups and reach audiences most effectively. However, PSBs are facing increasing competition from commercial broadcasting in India. Addressing the issue of challenges to public service broadcasting in the Asia Pacific region, the seminar titled 'Media Proliferation: How can Broadcasters Best Serve Public Interest', held in New Delhi, articulated that public service broadcasters need to create 'new audiences' and produce 'quality programming'. This will help PSBs to be more responsible and competitive so that they can manage the issue of competition from other commercial channels (AMIC, 1999). This is important because commercial broadcasting in India has made a dramatic impression on audiences, bringing a great variety of programs into rural and urban homes, which have entertainment value and commercial interest (Rahim, 1994; Rajagopal, 1993).

The proliferation of satellite and cable television channels in India fulfilled the entertainment needs of the audiences, but left a huge gap in development programming (MIB, 2000). In order to sustain audiences and gain commercial revenue, Doordarshan, the national public television service, broadcast film-based entertainment programs, and remains largely an urban phenomenon rather than rural (Jayaprakash & Shoesmith, 1999; Joseph, 1996; Karnard, 1989). Rowland and Tracey (1990, p.21) While reviewing PSBs worldwide argue that 'in their efforts to survive, many public broadcasters seem all willing to abandon their public service commitments'. Many authors, researchers, and activists in India and overseas believe that radio, with its cheap cost, easy access, reach and portability, can be more effective than other forms of media communication (Joseph, 1996; Powell III, 1999). Joseph(1996) argues that:

With growing commercialization, privatization and globalization, television has increasingly become identified with entertainment, with programmes designed primarily to cater to the tastes of the urban middle and upper classes. The dilution of educational content of television naturally reinforces the

existing disparities in conventional educational facilities which, in turn, hinder human development by accentuating inequalities in information levels and thereby help perpetuate exploitative processes (Joseph, 1996, p.64).

In order to attract audiences, the Indian television service, Doordarshan, recently decided to broadcast mainly film-based entertainment programs. The television audiences, however, choose these programs to watch and the medium is mostly preferred for its entertainment value. The studio-based developmental programs, including agricultural programs on DD are unpopular and often ignored. Hence, scholars and media experts believe radio could better serve as a developmental tool than television. Moreover, its low cost and accessibility enhances audience participation (Hassan & Zakariah, 1993; Varghese, 1995). These characteristics help radio to be more intimate than any other medium of mass communication. However, it is also important to consider that rural audiences need entertainment and that film songs, drama and short stories, along with 'service' programs. When it comes to audience preference of programs, (Mody, 1991) argues that even though audiences have asked for programs to solve their problems in agriculture and health, entertainment is still their primary interest area.

Meanwhile, rural and indigenous audiences in South India, also consider the cultural programs, village profile, folk songs, tribal songs and devotional songs as useful and interesting programs. In the recent past, AIR realized the importance of field-based programs and radio personnel began respect the rural audience views, irrespective of their socio-economic, political and educational background. In other words, radio, thanks to the decentralization policy, is becoming more accessible for audience participation than television:

The fact that there has been no attempt to promote local or community television through the provision of simple programme generating and playback facilities on a local transmitter—which could be done at a reasonable cost—suggests that there is little remaining interest in using television as a catalyst for education, social progress, or participatory democracy, or even in increasing access to it among the poor, especially in rural areas (Joseph, 1996, p.65).

Considering these factors, this chapter critically analyses how indigenous audiences of Nilgiri hill areas in South India use Ooty Radio Station (ORS), a low power regional radio station of AIR, for public service and commercial programs. AIR is the only national public service broadcaster in India. In this context, a public service broadcaster like ORS, located near the tribal settlements to empower tribal audiences, can produce programs which are locally relevant, and also encouraging audience participation in both field-based and studio-based programs. Scannell (1989, p.142) argues that, 'it is important to acknowledge the ways in which radio and television have given voice to the voiceless and faces to the faceless, creating new communicative entitlements for excluded social groups.' In contrast, commercial channels such as regional satellite television telecast programs, which are largely irrelevant to the tribal audience life styles and their everyday problems. However, PSB increasingly encounter competition from the commercial channels through its purely entertainment programs. Leonard (1993, p.124), reviewing the arrival of STAR TV in Asia, argued that 'it was widely believed that STAR would fail, because it is free-to-air and relies on advertising for its revenue. But it hasn't failed yet; in fact it seems to be going from strength to strength'.

India planned the introduction of state sponsored local radio in the 1980s. The first ever local community radio service was introduced in Nagercoil, Tamil Nadu, South India in 1993. Although Nagercoil is well documented as a success story (Anjaneyalu, 1989; Jayaprakash, 1993), the programming policy was changed in the 1990s, the station then operated largely as a relay mechanism for programs originating from the major regional radio stations of AIR. It has been argued elsewhere (Jayaprakash, 2000), that the concept of local or community radio in India has been defeated. However, by contrast, ORS, although in policy term remains a regional radio service, actually serves its tribal audiences distinctively like a community radio. Considering its location and the people it serves, ORS is probably one of the most effective community based radio stations in Tamil Nadu, South India. It serves a very specific and in some senses, limited minority audiences. The tribal audiences are very obviously secluded from

the mainstream population, the majority of them being illiterate, or below high school education standard. Agriculture is the main profession of many of the audience, very few work as public servants.

Recent shifts in the indigenous mediascape

Critically reviewing the growing popularity of television and cable TV images in the Nilgiris, a journalist from this region, wrote:

I believe that television demeans and trivialises everything and everyone connected with it. I feel that the TV is going to be the cause for the downfall of civilization- in short, it is the advent of the Dark Ages. This Dark Age has been brought about, not by suppression of knowledge and information, but its dazzling assault on our senses. The result is nothing short of a catastrophe. For all practical purposes, everything in Indian society has become a branch of entertainment-business, news, politics, religion, sports, culture, you name it. Why? Because people can no longer make sense of their own world; they are fed with an overwhelming volume of "information". This mysterious "information" and the sheer complexity of it, it is bombarded everyday into the minds of eager and yielding recipients. The "information" encourages all those along their pursuit in front of their idiot boxes. But do they find a coherent image? The answer is resounding "No" (Ullash Kumar, 1998, p.7).

Toda settlements are located in the highest altitude areas in the hills of Nilgiris, their settlements are scattered and often located in the most remote regions where cable television operators cannot reach. Cable service providers do not think of the Toda settlement audiences as viable business propositions. On the other hand, the Kotas live as communities, in regions of comparatively lower altitude, compared to the Todas. In the Kota settlements, there can be more than 50 houses with power, giving them access to cable television.

Figure: 13



An overview of Kota settlement

Although the tribal audiences have access to cable television, radio is still considered an important medium for information, entertainment and development. When the Kotas first obtained a satellite television dish for twenty thousand rupees for their settlement in Tiruchikadi (a Kota settlement), there was a temptation to ignore radio.

Figure: 14



Satellite dish at Tiruchikadi Village

However, audiences realized that they could not simply sit in front of the television set for long periods. Tribal audiences felt that exposure to television would affect their children's education and their everyday work. Considering this, elders from one of the Kota villages (Kundha Kothagiri), did not permit cable television in their village. This scenario is clearly understood from the critique of Ullashkumar (1998, p.7), 'I hold television responsible for the current deplorable state of affairs in society. The lack of thinking, the lack of will to act, the death of civilization; all because of television-it has become a role model for all'.

Increasingly, tribal audiences hesitate to visit their neighbors' houses to watch television because they do not want to disturb them. In short, the introduction of television has disrupted the rhythm of normal tribal life. On the other hand, non-television households, as well as those who own a radio at home, listen to radio programs regularly. Audiences who listened to radio regularly, before subscribing to cable television, tended to ignore radio programs after the arrival of cable television at home.

Jegannathan, a 30-year-old Kota man from Tiruchikadi village, notes:

When we had a cable connection at home we placed our radio set in the corner of the house and the radio set gathered dust. Now after few months we have started listening to radio again

The locally relevant cultural programs brought the audiences back to radio listening. Tribal audiences attach considerable importance to locally produced cultural programs which are relevant to their lifestyles, because their culture has never been presented in mass media like this before. As a social worker, from the Toda community, Pothali kuttan, points out:

If there are radio programs relevant to the hill audiences, people are ready to switch off their televisions and tune into radio programs.

He had observed this trend when he visited a number of the Toda settlements. My observation of radio-listening behavior also confirmed this pattern of media use. Later in my fieldwork, a 30-year-old man compared agricultural programs on radio and television saying:

Agricultural programs shown on TV are irrelevant to this place and climate. They don't give information about carrot and potato, which we are largely cultivating here.

It is also interesting to observe that in the context of media use in developing countries, that villagers generally do not hesitate to visit their neighbors to watch television. This pattern of television viewing is prevalent in the tribal settlements of the Nilgiris, where the trend is transforming the patterns of media use. A 15-year-old male high school student from Sholur Kokkal, Subramanyam, said:

I don't use television much because when I go to my neighbor's house to watch television sometimes they have guests. If I go there it will be disturbing to them. So I hesitate to visit my neighbor's house to watch television.

Parents are also cautious about their children's everyday media use because they feel strongly that exposure to television could affect their children's education, as well as their everyday work. Particularly agricultural-related work, hence their economical development. Tirumurugan, a 35-year-old Kota man, suggests:

Television viewing would affect our children's education and our everyday work.

He felt that the entertainment value of cable television would tempt them to watch television for many hours, as many of them would get completely carried away by its film-based entertainment programs. However, we cannot deny the impact that the arrival of television in the home has had on radio. After the arrival of a television set in the home, listening to radio drama is reduced. Also, listening to the radio has decreased in the evening and at night. Jegennathan said:

We used to listen to radio news in the evening especially BBC Tamil news. However, for the past eight months [since they got cable television] we have stopped listening to radio at night. Nowadays we watch Sun TV [regional private satellite television] news at 8 p.m.

Audiences of this region are entertained with many other regional satellite television channels, such as Raj TV, Vijay TV, Udaya TV, Gemini TV and Asianet. Apart from satellite television, the Nilgiris town has access to two CCTV networks, Nilgiri television network and Ooty Television network (Uliash Kumar, 1998). As discussed in the 'Age and Radio Listening' chapter, elderly people listen to the radio regularly, whereas children and teenagers are looking for entertainment through cable television, visiting their neighbor's houses to watch television. Furthermore, some economically well-off families feel that television provides them with informative and entertaining programs, so feel they do not need the radio for news. It is also useful to mention here that AIR newscasts often ignore development news or rural news. Shah (1988, p.428) argues that 'AIR newscasts contain relatively little content that can be called development news'. Shah further insists that 'more thorough and more frequent reporting of a wider range of development issues is likely to improve the quality of AIR development news' (p.429).

My interaction with the literate tribal audiences reveals that they rely more on regional Tamil language newspapers, such as the '*Daily Thanthi*', '*Dinamalar*', *Dinakaran*, and so on for local news. Newspaper reach is almost negligible in remote settlements but a few settlements located near the main road, arrange through bus drivers, to hand over the newspapers to a person who is waiting alongside the road. Since the Toda live in a higher altitude of the Nilgiri hills, it is very hard for them to get newspapers. When the Toda men visit Ooty once a week, they get newspapers, take them back to their settlements, and pass the papers onto other members of their family and friends. Generally women do not have any choice which newspapers are purchased; the Toda men choose the newspapers, whilst the children rarely read the newspapers. When asked about her newspaper reading habits, Kokila said, I read *Dinamalar* [Tamil Daily] newspaper, my father brings newspaper.

As far as newspaper reading is concerned some Toda children from the town settlements which are located near the town, read 'Young World' a supplement from *The Hindu* (English) newspaper. Children read Tamil newspapers, such as '*Thina thanthi*' (morning Tamil daily), and '*Malai Malar*

(evening Tamil daily), occasionally, when their fathers or elder brothers bring them to their settlements. However, due to the high illiteracy rate amongst tribal audiences, newspaper readership is negligible. When comparing radio to other mass media like newspapers and magazines, Pothalikuttan said, '*radio is like headlines*' because it provides news and information briefly whereas print medium investigates and informs through detailed information. He also mentioned that for remote audiences, newspapers are not easily accessed. He also said, 'we cannot buy newspapers everyday. In some remote settlements you cannot even see people reading newspapers'. He feels that radio is the only source of information and that Todas really love radio-listening. This observation was confirmed by a 30-year-old Toda man, who said:

TV means mainly drama and cinema and we can watch games such as football, cricket ... Radio we can listen through our ears. The news bulletins are same in radio and TV. News, it is sufficient if we could hear from our ears. Not necessary to see [on TV]. When we are busy with our activities, we will not be having free time until the evening, radio means we can keep it next to us and listen to news and we can go...

The audiences mostly prefer radio-listening, because they feel it is easier to listen to radio than to watch television. The basic characteristics of radio, such as intimacy and portability, encourage them to use radio as a 'family medium'.

Since many television serials and dramas are scheduled after 7pm, it is generally considered the television viewing time, especially for audiences in the Kota settlements who have cable television. In order to attract audiences, ORS could concentrate programs between 4 pm and 7 pm in the evening and also introduce morning broadcasts as well. However, we should not forget the fact that if there is no television set in a household all the members of the family listen to radio. In rural areas, very few people can afford to buy television sets so radio still plays a major role by informing about current affairs and entertaining its listeners through film songs, dramas and various other programs. Some audiences say that they know at what time AIR broadcasts certain radio programs and listen to them. Women

audiences also select their favorite programs and film songs at appropriate listening times. Tribal audiences also listen to overseas radio, such as Singapore, Malaysia etc in the morning hours. These stations broadcast new Tamil songs in their Tamil language broadcast. Sri Lanka radio is very popular amongst the audiences. Unlike AIR, Sri Lanka broadcasts Tamil film songs throughout the day, and some housewives tune into Sri Lanka radio all the time.

On ORS, apart from news, local cultural programs are very popular amongst the hill radio audiences. Since the hill audiences like to listen to locally relevant cultural programs, ORS broadcasts many local programs. Thus local audiences feel Ooty radio station is useful and important to them. Local programs are popular, one young educated youth said, 'we don't miss local programs from radio'. During my fieldwork, I could see that radio listeners have an awareness of local issues and political news.

Ooty radio personnel give importance to audience participation and are not very particular about 'elite' participation. Men and women, rich and poor, literate and illiterate are all given the opportunity to participate in various cultural and folk programs. Meanwhile, after listening to a certain number of good programs, audiences themselves approach AIR Ooty and express their intention to be involved and present locally relevant cultural programs. In this category, *Malai Aruvi* is one of the most popular programs amongst the audiences. Agricultural families still expect a lot of information from radio, listening and participating in the agricultural program, *Thottamum Thozhilum*.

I observed the Kotas who have recently gained access to satellite television and saw how this recent exposure has altered the ways in which they use radio. I explore how, in this new media environment for tribal audiences, ORS can serve as a channel for public service broadcasting. In this chapter, I have mainly considered agricultural programs, news, current affairs, cultural and locally produced programs that deal with the tribal audiences' lives as public service programs. ORS is mainly concerned with local issues and the everyday lives of tribal audiences of this region, apart from a few sponsored commercials and relay programs from the regional and

national radio stations. It is important to have PSB because the informational and educational needs of the audiences may not be met by commercial broadcasting. This chapter also traces the programs people listen to in 'service' and commercial programs. Another important issue arising from the shift in the indigenous mediascape is that in India 'the proliferation of channels has fuelled many wants and fulfilled some needs, but has left gaps. A PSB should fill these gaps' (MIB, 2000, p.8).

The Audience Research Unit (ARU) of AIR and media researchers in India, have not looked at the recent introduction of satellite television channels amongst tribal audiences, or their impact on radio listening. It is important to see how radio could be used as a Public Service Broadcaster, as the newly set up autonomous corporation, Prasar Bharati, strongly believes radio has enormous potential to serve the rural and remote audiences. Considering this strong hope for radio, my research found that ORS has many limitations as a public service broadcaster, serving the remote tribal audiences of the Toda and Kota. I argue that the recent introduction of cable and satellite television in Kota, as well as few other tribal settlements, has altered the way the Kotas use radio in their everyday life. I will also show that ORS is unpopular amongst the Kotas in spite of its programming that largely concentrates on tribal people, their culture and lifestyle. On the other hand, many regional radio stations and their public service programs, particularly agricultural programs, although they are irrelevant, are tuned into by the tribal audiences of this region because of the various reasons that are dealt with here. It is highly important for this low power radio (ORS) to know the pulse of these tribal audiences because none of the other radio stations have access to these people who are located in the remote areas and are often secluded from the mainstream media and population.

The Todas live in the regions of highest altitude in the hills of Nilgiris, their settlements scattered, often located in remote regions. There are only three to five houses in a settlement, most of the do not have a power supply. Hence, cable television operators cannot reach these Toda settlements and do not think it is viable for them to extend their business to these areas. On

the other hand, the Kotas live as communities, in regions of comparatively lower altitude than the Todas. In the Kota settlements there can be more than fifty houses with a power supply, and so they have access to cable television. A Kota man from the Tiruchikadi village very happily said, 'we get eighteen channels including Star Movies, Star Plus, Star Sports and so on'. However, in Kota settlements, audiences still feel that radio is important, as the majority of households do not have television sets. For example, Silvan, a 20-year-old man from the Kollimalai village argues:

Even if television is here, radio is still important. For those who do not have television at home, radio is the 'main use'.

Remote audiences from the Nilgiri hill areas expressed a need for both radio and television. Sholur Kokkal is a village with 64 houses where only 15 houses have television sets and cable connections, so the Kotas remain convinced that radio is important for their *Kokkal* (village) especially in accessing the news and maintaining links with the outside community. Kota children are exposed to more satellite and cable television in their settlements than any other tribal communities selected for this study. The Toda and Kannikaran communities have very remote or negligible access to satellite television. The Todas have little exposure to television in their 'town' settlements and cable television exposure is almost negligible. During my fieldwork, I found only two rich families who had access to cable television. There were houses located far away from the other Toda *munds* (villages). There were no signs of the Todas visiting these houses to watch satellite television programs. In town settlements audiences have access to Doordarshan (DD), and the mythological serials such as 'Jai Anuman', and 'Sri Krishna' are very popular. Ratheesh Singh, a 12-year-old Toda boy listens to ORS for 'malai aruvi' and film songs. Though they listen to radio everyday in his house he said 'they mainly watch television', rather than listening to radio. During this interview, Ratheesh Singh was listening to Tamil film songs on ORS. I asked him, 'but now you are listening to radio?' He replied, 'we listen to ORS in the evening between 5.30 and 6 pm for Tamil film songs'.

Traditionally, AIR broadcasts devotional songs when they start their broadcasts each day. It was a very bold move on the part of the then Assistant Station Director (ASD) of ORS to schedule Tamil film songs right at the start of the broadcasts. This innovative step made the listeners tune into ORS in the evening because Tamil film songs are largely used as background music by radio listeners. Generally, settlements who have access to DD still listen to radio for two reasons. Firstly, they listen to ORS for its locally produced tribal programs, such as *malai aruvi* and *yengai giramam*. Secondly, they listen to film songs as background music. Badagas, the migrant population, who live in the lower altitude of the Nilgiri hills, have good access to cable television because most of the families own Tea estates and are richer than the Todas and Kotas. Since the Kota settlements comprise fifty to sixty houses and have electricity in their settlements, they have access to cable television as well. The Todas are largely dependent on radio in most of the settlements. Pothees Kutian, a 35-year-old Toda man, when asked about this poor access to cable television in Toda settlements said, 'we have small number of houses in Toda settlements so no cable television'. However, Toda children who have relatives live near Ooty town have cable access and Toda children occasionally visit them and watch cable television. My interview with Nerathekuttan, a 12-year-old boy from Pagalkodu mund explains this:

Researcher: How many houses are there in your mund?

Nerathekuttan: Two houses

Researcher: Do you have radio at home?

Nerathekuttan: Yes

Researcher: Cable television?

Nerathekuttan: Yes I do

Researcher: Where, in your mund?

Nerathe kuttan: No, Quarters

Researcher: Which quarters?

Nerathekuttan: My Auntie's house, Near Ooty, at HPF.

Researcher: How frequently do you go there to watch television?

Nerathekuttan: Weekly once

Researcher: When do you go?

Nerathekuttan: Saturday and Sunday

Researcher: You didn't go today? [I interviewed him on Sunday]

Nerathekuttan: No

Researcher: Why?

Nerathekuttan: I came here to play

Researcher: What do you play?

Nerathekuttan: Football.

Although Nerathekuttan claims that he goes to his aunt's place every weekend to watch cable television, it is pertinent to note from the above interview that he does not go every weekend to watch cable television. Children play hide and seek, football and cricket too. However, the point here is that very few Toda children get access to cable television from their relative's houses, which are located close to Ooty town. A 10-year-old Toda boy, Inithe kuttan, from the Thalapatheri mund, who is studying fourth standard at HPF school and who is a regular listener to radio, gets to see

some cable television at HPF quarters. He has radio at home but does not have a television at home.

Researcher: What do you watch on television?

Inithe kuttan: I don't watch television at all

Researcher: Do you go to others' houses to watch Television?

Inithe kuttan: Near Ooty, at Hpf, my auntie's place, near our school, our school I go there and come home.

Researcher: Do you watch everyday?

Inithe kuttan: No weekly once only

Researcher: Do they have cable television? Sun television?

Inithe kuttan: Yes, color television with Sun TV.

Researcher: What are the programs you watch on Sun television?

Inithe kuttan: I don't watch any programs, only films

The interview with Inithe kuttan and many other Toda children, confirms the view that the Toda children get some remote access to cable television, most significantly watching films and film-based entertainment shows, on television. Apart from town settlements, Attakor mund is the only other settlement which has a television set, and they watch DD programs and have limited access to cable television. Pasupathi Kuttan, a 14-year-old school Toda boy from the Malaiveethi mund, which does not have electricity, has no television and goes to Attakor mund to watch television.

Researcher: Do you watch cinema?

Pasupathi Kuttan Imm [yes]

Researcher: Where?

Pasupathi Kuttan: We go to "Attakor mund", and watch films on television. [Emphasis added]

It is not possible for the Toda children and other age groups to visit other settlements who have television because the distance between one settlement and another is not easily covered due to the poor roads and long distances. They need to walk two or three miles to reach another settlement that has a television. While access to DD programs was somehow possible for the remote settlements, cable television access is very difficult. Sathesh Kumar, a 12-year-old school student (Toda boy) from the Narikuzhi mund, does not have a radio or television at home. He observed that no one had cable television in their settlement, so he cannot watch Sun TV, Raj TV and so on. Mohan Raj, an 11-year-old Toda boy from this mund also said it is 'impossible' for them to watch these regional satellite television channels. Alex kuttan, an 11-year-old (sixth standard) Toda boy from the Kaadi mund expressed that it is impossible to watch television (DD) programs. Many Toda children who do not have radio at home and live in settlements that have television sets are unable to listen to radio programs but watch DD programs in their neighbors' houses. For example, Thosthali kuttan, an 11-year-old Toda boy, from the Nathanari mund and an 11-year-old girl, Simya from Koll mund, do not have a radio at home, but go to their neighbor's house to watch television. Awasthi, an 11-year-old Kota girl from the Tiruchikadi village, during a focus group discussion at the tribal school said, 'we don't listen to radio, we watch sun TV, Raj TV, Vijay TV'. She said she watches 'films and film songs'. She does not get to listen to radio, because she does not have a radio at home. They have owned a television set for the past two years, so have access to the regional satellite television station's news and entertainment programs which has made them ignore the radio in their households. Another important reason is that Awasthi and her parents use a tape recorder to listen to devotional and film songs, which make them ignore the radio. Vasuki, a 14-year-old Kota girl, also mentioned that she does not have a radio at home, watches Sun TV news at 8 pm and watches films on Saturday. While she watches mythological serials like 'Sri Krishna'

on DD, she does not watch any other children's program on television. Vasuki said:

I don't watch any children's programs on television. On Saturday night I watch 'saami nadagam' [mythological serial such as Ramayana and Mahabharat] on DD'.

Many tribal children I spoke to through interviews and focus group discussions told me that they watch films, dramas, mythological serials and occasionally news. It is also important to remember that there are eighty houses in Tiruchikadi, a Kota settlement, where only fifteen houses have television sets able to receive cable television. Sun TV is the most popular cable channel people like it for its wide coverage of world news and interesting talk shows during the weekend. Sun TV also telecasts regional news with colorful graphics and staff correspondents throughout the country. However, most cable TV households watch news on Sun TV in the evening and usually listen to morning news on radio. Few cable television households also listen to radio. So we cannot rule out that cable television households completely ignore radio. Cable television households who continuously watch Sun TV news ignore Doordarshan's news. Some women also said they still listen to film songs from radio. However, a cable television subscriber said:

Cable TV frequently broadcast films which contains sexual themes and obscene scenes. We cannot sit and watch those films as a family. Meanwhile, Doordarshan chooses good films and we won't be embarrassed when we sit and watch.

Some audiences say that they know what time AIR broadcasts certain radio programs, so can listen to news on time. Women audiences also select their favorite programs and film songs at appropriate times. However, in rural areas very few people can afford to buy television sets, hence radio still plays a major role by informing them current affairs and entertaining the listeners with film songs, dramas and various other programs. However, after 7pm it is generally considered a television viewing time and audiences sit down to watch television programs.

Figure: 15



Kota audiences watching cable television

We cannot say that in rural areas those who do not have television set, always watch television in their neighbors' houses. Audiences still hesitate to go to neighboring houses to watch television.

Although the Kotas visit their neighbor's houses to watch television, they hesitate to go to often, tuning their radio sets in the morning to listen to devotional songs, news, film songs and agricultural programs. Tirumurugan felt Kota audiences from the Tiruchikadi village do not ignore radio because Kota women love to listen to film songs and devotional songs while they perform their household work. Men listen to agricultural programs and news, though they watch television in the evening for entertainment because they feel both radio and satellite television news are different. Radio is comparatively very fast in reporting sports news and also has credibility amongst tribal audiences as it reports news objectively. Since the ORS reception quality is not good, Kota men tune to other regional radio stations such as Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Chennai in the morning hours, feeling that these agricultural programs are irrelevant to the local conditions of the Nilgiris. Murugesan from this village mentioned that Kota audiences increasingly tune into the radio to listen to film songs, drama and other

entertainment programs and are not inclined to listen to 'service' programs such as agricultural programs. From the focus group discussion and interviews that I had with tribal children it was clear that children in the cable television households largely ignore radio. One of the other reasons is that cable television households do not maintain their radio sets that they used before the arrival of television in their homes. When it comes to repairing a radio set, they need to take their sets to Ooty town to repair them, which involves at least half a day of their time and a minimum of 100 rupees.

Maintenance of Radio

While radio is actively used, one thing that I had not anticipated as a significant factor in media use was the maintenance of a radio set, which according to the hill audiences is very important. During my visits to many households in the remote settlements, I observed radio sets that were not in use. They struggle to maintain a radio for a long time. Revethi, a 21-year-old married Kannikaran woman from Piravilai settlement said:

I had a radio earlier but it is under repair for five months so I go to my neighbor's house to listen to radio.

In contrast, the scenario in Kota settlements in the Nilgiris is different. A 22-year-old Kota woman Devi, who is a housewife from Tiruchikadi, gets to watch television in the absence of radio. She said:

We had radio set before now it is under repair. I go to my neighbor's house at 12 noon to watch Sun TV. Before that I'll make sure that I finish my entire household work and cooking. My husband comes at 1 pm from work for lunch. When sun TV shows news, at that time I come home, serve him food (lunch) and go back again to watch sun TV. Then again in the evening I cook at 4.30. My husband comes back at 5 pm. Again he will go to work, I go again to watch Sun TV. My husband does not watch television.

However, there are instances where people replace their old radio sets with new ones. A 34-year-old agricultural laborer who lives in Thalapatheri mund, a Toda settlement which is located seventeen kilometers

from Ooty town, had a brand new transistor radio. He paid 480 Rupees (approximately twenty dollars) to replace his 'very old' radio, which he had used for more than twenty-five years. Another Illiterate Toda man expressing the same view said:

We've been listening to radio for the past 20 years or so, when it is old we buy a new radio set.

On the other hand, cable television provides them with entertainment and informative programs in Tamil, which tribal audiences, particularly children with cable television access at home, watch and are satisfied with. Mohankumar, aged, 18, argued, that while the Kota settlements have better access to cable television but only a limited number of households have televisions at home. He added that only 15 out of the 80 households in the Tiruchikadi village have access to cable television. He also argued that people still tune into the radio for news in the morning, because it has frequent news bulletins and provides up to date information on sports and politics, both national and regional. He said that cable television is mainly watched for its entertainment programs, like films and serials. Muthulakshmi, a 35-year-old Kota woman, said radio is still in use amongst cable television households. She herself having a cable television at home still tunes in on Wednesday nights and Saturday mornings for radio drama. Audiences also appreciate the program format and programming of AIR. Sivan, aged, 28, argued that technologies such as cable television and tape recorders cannot replace radio because radio always comes up with new program formats and sometimes the visual media adopt these formats in their programs. While explaining about tape recorders and radio, he said, 'with the tape recorder we always know what the songs are going to be, but on radio it will be always be unexpected songs'. Sankaran, aged, 30, said that though radio listening had been reduced, it was still important to have radio to listen to news and devotional songs in the morning.

Although Kota audiences from Tiruchikadi settlement are talking about the low popularity of radio after the arrival of cable television, Kollimalai, in another Kota village which does not have cable television, in spite of the availability of a power supply in this village, says radio is still popular.

Audiences from Kollimalai watch DD (national television), but radio remains very much in use. When I looked into the data of these two villages separately the difference was very obvious on radio use. At Tiruchikadi, radio is mostly used in the morning, mainly for news and devotional songs, but at Kollimalai, Kota audiences listen to all kind of programs, such as agricultural programs, women's program news, local programs and so on in the morning, afternoon and at night by tuning various radio stations.

The Kannikaran tribal community is one of the most remote communities in the Kanyakumari district where many have not seen cable television programs. They rely on radio for both entertainment and information. However, Kannikaran men complained that agricultural programs from the local radio station at Nagercoil are irrelevant to the hill locations where they cultivate tapioca, pepper, bananas and so on. While Sun TV is popular in the Kota settlements, it is not widely known in Kannikaran hamlets. A 35-year-old Kannikaran woman, Sri Devi from Koovalkadu Malai, has not heard about Sun TV at all. Moreover, the community television provided in this village for public service broadcasts has been used for watching entertainment programs. At the time of this research, the television set was under repair due to the poor maintenance by panchayat officials. This does not allow the audiences of this settlement to watch DD programs as well.

Conclusion

For many years (until 1997), AIR has functioned as a propaganda arm of the ruling party's political movements, as far as news is concerned. Developmental news reporting is comparatively scarce and generally rural people's views have been ignored. On the contrary, AIR news formats predominantly use the official version of the facts rather than ordinary people's views. For the past fifty years, AIR's news and current affairs programming have been viewed in many quarters as propaganda for the ruling political parties interests. This has included development news and

communication in many respects. According to the Director-General of AIR news services division:

...[D]evelopment news has to concern itself with all that happens to the whole people and their welfare in the broadest sense of the word. It cannot be only about government plans and official speeches or statistics about projects. A particular person, a family, a village or a particular community should be the stuff of development news (Bhaumik, 1996, p.9).

This system of programming 'alienates instructions from the target groups', and the purpose of development communication has failed miserably in India. Apart from the failure of development programming at the production stage, there were some serious problems at the reception stage. Community radio sets provided in the villages by the governments were mostly guarded by the rich elites in the villages thereby preventing common peoples from accessing this media (Singh, 1996; Yadava, 1996).

The recent autonomous status has helped AIR radio to be more flexible in terms of program format, presentation, audience participation, and production of programs. ORS serves its tribal audiences distinctively like a community radio in India. The findings revealed that the locally relevant cultural programs brought tribal audiences back to radio listening. Although cable television households ignore radio, it is still popular amongst the remote audiences.

The introduction of commercial media and its increasing availability amongst tribal audiences raises major questions about cultural preservation and continuity. The availability of western programs essentially urban in its orientation may be viewed as potentially problematic. To date tribal audiences appear to have adopted a cautious attitude, although the young, especially male interest towards sports such as cricket seems to be rapidly changing. Further change is inevitable as the reach of different media continues to penetrate the more remote communities in South India.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This thesis shows for first time the depth and scope of media consumption amongst tribal audiences in the remote parts of South India in a rapidly changing mediascape. Radio – listening has undergone a major change, which necessitates some important changes in the programming level as well as the manner in which we think about the modern mass media among communities in remote locations. Although remote audiences in this study are aware and exposed to all levels of radio broadcasting such as local, regional, national and international, they still rely on low power radio stations for development programs especially agricultural programs and local news. This is encouraging in the context of building an on-going community radio movement in India because the findings of this research reinforce the view that radio can be a very useful medium for social, economic and cultural development among rural and remote hill audiences. Through my ethnographic fieldwork, that radio is confronted by many challenges. And if it is to be successful it must be relevant to the remote audiences.

There has been a shift in the Indigenous mediascape of India recently with the arrival of satellite and cable television. Tribal communities have dramatically changed the way radio is used for development, information, and entertainment. Tribal audiences spend their time moving between radio and television, with radio being used largely in the morning and television in the evening. Audiences who work in the fields find it difficult to get spare time for radio listening in the evening. The regional satellite and cable television services target audiences in the evening with film-based entertainment programs, and these audiences tend now to watch television programs, and rather than listen to radio programs at these times.

Radio is now diffused extensively throughout tribal communities in South India and tribal people are active radio listeners. Their use of radio is shaped by sociological factors, such as gender, age, possession of radio sets and education, as well as location. Radio use varies according to the location of the settlements and communities. Regional satellite and cable television services have presented a major challenge to radio in these communities, especially in the evening. Even tribal communities have become embedded in the new Indian mediascape and the use of radio in their everyday lives cannot be studied in isolation.

In chapter four, I have argued that the main hindrance to community radio-broadcasting remains to be the Government's intransigence over autonomy and ownership. The majority of radio stations, except the recently privatized FM radio stations, are owned and controlled by the Prasar Bharati Corporation (PBC). While the commercial FM radio stations are privatized and largely available in the metropolitan cities such as Mumbai, Kolkata, New Delhi, and Chennai (Kala, 1999), development – oriented, independent community radio stations are yet to evolve in India. While there is ample opportunity for the Internet to grow through community centers with Internet cafes, the independent community radio stations are still blocked, so there is a danger that the gap between the information rich and information poor within the country will grow due to the restrictive monopoly of radio broadcasting in India. Having expanded and reached the saturation point in AM/FM/SW broadcasting, Indian broadcasters are now looking for alternative media. I argue that the two most important sites for expansion, are community radio and Internet broadcasting. However, the telecommunications network is still underdeveloped in rural India (Westerveld & Prasad, 1994) and is a drawback to Internet radio.

Despite a decrease in advertising revenue from radio broadcasting, radio remains a major medium in the Indian mediascape because it remains cheap to produce and even cheaper to receive. It may be that a loss of interest in the commercial sector, combined with technological innovation may be the salvation of community radio. However, the real change will have to occur at the official level. I argue that, although a limited form of autonomy

is grudgingly given, fissures have emerged in the Indian fabric of control and there are bodies (such as NGOs) waiting to enter the field. So long as the NGOs and broadcast activists remain, there is hope for community broadcasting in India (Noronha & Jayaprakash, 2002). Although India does not have a comprehensive indigenous media policy, by improving the infrastructure, and by encouraging increased participation from the tribal communities, radio stations such as ORS and NRS can be transformed into successful and effective indigenous radio services.

Chapter five demonstrated that listening to radio in the tribal communities is influenced by gender and number of social and cultural factors. While men generally prefer informative programs, Toda women, who are traditionally ignored in their own cultural festivals and religion, are tuning into Christian broadcasts which come from overseas radio, such as FEBA, and are ignoring entertainment programs like film songs. Men do not prevent their wives from visiting churches on Sundays or listening to Christian broadcasts. However, tribal men do not show much interest towards Christianity or Christian radio programs. I have demonstrated through interviews with audiences that men listen to radio while they work in the field, while women largely listen to radio while they perform their household activities. Women are very much attached to radio and they greatly enjoy listening to radio whilst they are involved in their traditional handicrafts work ('puthukuli'), which is the main cultural activity of the Toda women.

Chapter six, mainly argued that while men and women have a specific program preferences such as Christian broadcasts and agricultural programs, children have different interests. Children largely use both radio and television for entertainment and rarely for news. Although they expressed the fact that they listen to news in the morning, with their family members, they look forward to radio drama and film songs. Again, children's programs from the regional radio stations are not popular amongst tribal children. The Kota children watch films, film song programs, dramas, and serials, but not children's programs. The Toda children feel very lonely when they are left alone in the scarcely populated 'munds' (settlements) and radio is a good companion for them. However, teenage girls are more active

listeners of radio than boys. It was evident that tribal audiences, particularly teenage girls write to the radio stations, asking for solutions to their problems. Audiences also write letters in appreciation to the station management and sometimes include criticisms as well.

Another important factor that has emerged from the analysis is how the growing cassette-culture and ownership of tape recorders have influenced radio listening. Those audiences who have a tape recorder choose to listen to devotional and film songs using this technology. Also, at the time of this research, Badaga songs were released in the form of audio-cassettes and, since tape recorders were not widely available to the Toda, Kota and Kannikaran audiences, the impact was not so huge. However, these households do use tape recorders, mainly for film and devotional songs, but largely tune into ORS and listen to '*malai aruvi*' when it comes to tribal cultural songs.

Chapter six discusses how a medium like radio is instrumental in linking young tribal boys to the mainstream regional media through the game of cricket. Cricket, which used to be a popular game mainly only in the cities and towns is now widely played in tribal settlements. Tribal audiences gained interest on cricket by listening to live cricket commentaries. Many youngsters told me that they listen to radio to get up-to-date cricket scores and commentaries on AIR stations. Ever since India won the cricket World Cup in 1983, this game has become more popular in India and radio commentaries are now very familiar amongst audiences. Whenever India plays test matches at the Chepauk MA Chidambaram stadium of Chennai, there are Tamil commentaries broadcast on AIR. Chennai and most of the regional radio stations relay these broadcasts. Young tribal audiences are interested in listening to these broadcasts. I observed posters of cricket stars like Sachin Tendulkar and Mohammad Azharuddin (former Indian captains) displayed in their houses.

Figure: 16



'We need radio': Kota teenage boy and his mother

One of the boys, probably through the exposure to radio and television said, 'cricket is our religion (in India) and Sachin Tendulkar is our God'.

I have also demonstrated that Kota boys are divided in their views on the importance of radio. During the focus group discussions in the settlements that have cable television (Sholur Kokkal & Tiruchikadi), Kota boys opined that television is providing information and entertainment to them and that they do not need the radio anymore. On the other hand, boys who have only a radio at home argued that although they have access to television, radio is important because whenever there are power cuts in their villages they can listen to the radio. More importantly radio can be listened to in the fields ('*thottam*') when they work. Also, they mentioned that it is not always convenient to visit their neighbors' houses to watch television. In Kota settlements parents also think that excessive exposure to television programs can affect their children's studies. They also feel that television viewing amongst men will affect their everyday work. Toda children live in remote settlements, being almost secluded from television exposure, as only a few settlements have remote access to television. They need to walk two

to three miles to reach another settlement that has television, so very rarely go to watch television.

Chapter seven argued that when it comes to radio listening there are three important factors: firstly, the time that the listeners wake up in the morning and listen to the radio; secondly, how they adjust their radio listening according to their everyday lives, particularly with their work, which largely deals with agriculture; thirdly, how audiences negotiate their time between radio and television, television is also beginning to reach the tribal settlements. Interviewees told me that in the morning they listen to the 'program schedule' ('nigazhchi nirai) for the day, particularly noting the broadcast times on ORS and NRS, as well as other major regional radio stations of AIR.

This chapter also questions and discusses the convenient times for listening to such programs on agriculture, women's programs, and news. There has been evidence from the interviews and focus groups that tribal audiences prefer to have morning broadcasts from ORS. They prefer to have agricultural programs both in the morning and evening. Having a broadcast only in the evening is a drawback for ORS and NRS. They pointed out that all the other major regional radio stations, such as Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli and Chennai, have morning broadcasts. They think that morning is the best time for them to listen to agricultural broadcasts.

It is also interesting to note that in the United States radio is preferred in the morning. Patterson (1989, p.22) argued:

Radio remains a very strong source of news for most people in this country, especially in the morning, and for almost half (49 per cent) it is the first source of news in the morning. (TV is second, with 29 percent and newspapers third, with 15 per cent.) Radio is also the first source of news when any local emergency occurs.

The tribal audiences of South India express the same view. However, regarding agricultural programs, tribal audiences expressed their interest in having both morning and evening broadcasts so that anyone who misses the morning broadcast could listen in the evening. Both men and women felt that

they might not reach home early enough in the evening to listen to the radio due to their busy schedule of work in the fields. Women largely felt that women's programs scheduled at 1 pm on the regional radio stations were only suitable for housewives, feeling that it would be good to have the programs broadcast either in the morning or in the evening. Audiences very often relate their radio listening time to their work. For example, they said 'we listen to radio until we go to work in the morning and switch on the radio when we come back home from work'.

Other than cultural and field-based local programs, developmental programs, such as agricultural programs also help tribal communities to get important information on fertilizers, pesticides and crop protection. This information is crucial because tribal communities, especially the Todas, are new to agriculture in the Nilgiris.

Chapter eight discussed that scheduling of programs at an appropriate time is really a challenge for public service broadcasters because commercial broadcasters, such as regional satellite television channels, aim to capture audiences by broadcasting film-based entertainment programs. In this regard, even the Tamil film industry is worried about this move, hence in order to sustain its revenue collection at cinemas in the rural remote areas, the Tamil Film Actors association has banned its member artists from offering interviews to television, both terrestrial and satellite. The latest 'Report of the Review Committee on the working of Prasar Bharati' (2000), instituted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB), discussed Prasar Bharati as a public service broadcaster. The report states:

The public service broadcaster also needs to take into account the media needs of the minority audience, whether they be ethnic, religious or linguistic. Such a broadcaster needs to concern itself with developing taste, promoting understanding, spread literacy and development, create informed debate and empower the disadvantaged: major issues that a commercial broadcaster rarely addresses (MIB, 2000, p.9).

While undertaking this step to promote 'service' programs for the tribal audiences it is important and unavoidable that the low power radio stations need to sustain its audience interest. This can be achieved by providing

interesting programs at convenient times. The point here is that in the highly volatile media environment of Southern India there is a change or shift in the way people use radio in their everyday lives, and they now negotiate their time between radio and television. The role of television in the remote audiences everyday lives and the way it influences radio-listening cannot be ignored.

It is debatable at least amongst young tribal audiences that radio lacks visual impact. Radio has some limitations such as the fact that it does not have a visual aspect and sometimes the audio signals lack clarity. Consequently, it becomes essential to consider using other 'support media', along with radio broadcasts for development purposes. Photographs, posters, other community publications and even rural newspapers can be used to improve the process of radio broadcasting in rural areas (Vyas, 1986, p.169).

Essentially, what is required is a 'bottom-up' model for development broadcasting that takes into account the challenges that the new media present, with their emphasis on entertainment. Hence, the more participatory and entertaining programs are, the more they can reach and teach the target audiences. This conclusion has been reached from a careful analysis of the comments made by members of the Indigenous communities of the Nilgiris, on the way they use radio in their everyday lives.

Although the autonomous status is in transition it was clear from my observation that ORS programs have shifted from rigid programming to a more flexible style. Considering the limitations of illiterate remote tribal audiences of this region, the assistant station director of ORS introduced a new trend in feed-back programs. Usually, feed-back programs (*Karuthumada*) are recorded in studios by reading listeners letters. By contrast, the new program was recorded in settlements, where the illiterate along with others, expressed their opinion about ORS. Similarly, It is a convention to start the program of the day with devotional songs from the Hindu, Christian and Muslim religions. The ORS station received many letters from its tribal audiences when the then station director began everyday programs with film songs rather than devotional songs. This was

controversial. This shows us that the audiences closely follow the schedule of the program as well as the content.

Audiences also raised crucial issues on localization of programs. Part of the Informants felt that ORS's agricultural programs were useful to the local conditions, giving locally relevant information and easy to follow instructions. However, there are audiences who complained that the agricultural programs are 'too local', saying that they know these practices from experience, and do not have to listen to radio programs on agriculture. This was the only criticism of this broadcast. They would also like to know how agriculture practices differ in different areas and would like to know whether there is any possibility of adopting those different agricultural strategies in the Nilgiris. In other words, they would like to know more information about innovations and new scientific methods, which are emerging from the agricultural universities and research centers.

This is a significant study because it employs ethnographic research to investigate tribal communities hitherto ignored by mainstream media research. What the people have to say also provides new insight into how media impacts on these communities which opens up a range of new avenues for research.

Limitations

Researching remote hill audiences is sometimes difficult, and unpredictable weather conditions in the hills such as Nilgiris may interfere in the process of fieldwork. Although hill audiences are friendly, it is difficult to arrange and plan focus group discussions among hill audiences because most of them are agricultural laborers, and for them sparing even few minutes is a major task. Undeveloped road conditions, transportation, and telecom facilities also need to be tackled because it requires a lot of time and energy to plan data collection such as focus group discussions in advance. Hence, it is important to reach settlements early in the morning and plan data collection such as interviews and focus group discussions.

Future Research

My thesis shows conclusively that more research is required in a number of crucial areas if we are to have any further understanding of the contemporary Indian mediascape that is composed of a multiplicity of audiences. I have researched one of those audiences and revealed that we need to ask different questions of the Indian media. Although I interviewed program producers of AIR, it is important to look at 'programming philosophies' (Ahikvist, 2001), at how the programs are being produced, the problems encountered in production and at the strategies adopted to overcome them, in both the studios and in the field. Secondly, AIR has a website that has live, as well as stored, programs.

Although Internet radio is still in its infancy in developing countries (Black, 2001), and certainly in India (Rao & Natesan, 1996), it will be interesting to look later at the growth, expansion and use of Internet radio amongst rural communities in India. In addition, research on AIR and the rural audiences usage of educational programs, such as school broadcasts, distance learning, adult education and health programs including issues related to family planning, immunization and child care will provide in-depth insight into audience analysis (Abbas, 1987; Ansu-Kyeremeh, 1992; Kapoor, 1996; Vyas, 1986).

These tribal people have become sophisticated consumers of radio in a relatively short period of time. The introduction of radio has changed their perceptions of space and re-ordered their use of time. Radio is no longer an addition to their lives but has become an integral part of their daily routine both in work and leisure. By accommodating such profound cultural shifts, the Indigenous audiences of the Nilgiris have also built up expectations of radio. If the medium fails to meet these expectations it will fail to fulfil its multifunctional capabilities. Radio is still treated with great respect among indigenous and rural people, and the program makers for the low power radio stations serving this audience will have to work hard to maintain the respect of listeners. As one villager said 'We cannot stop listening to radio, we hear film songs and news from all directions'.

In short, this work points to the need to be able to distinguish with a greater degree of refinement between the different types audiences that comprise the Indian media audience; the difference between the rural and urban; the southern and the northern; the educated and the illiterate and so on. In doing this work we will be able to speak with greater authority about the contemporary Indian mediascape. As it stands, we have only a partial view that is filtered through a distorted lens of the legacy of colonialism.

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APPENDIX 1

Nilgiri District Map

NILGIRI DISTRICT MAP

Scale 1 cm : 2.52 Kms

(1 Inch : 4 Miles)

